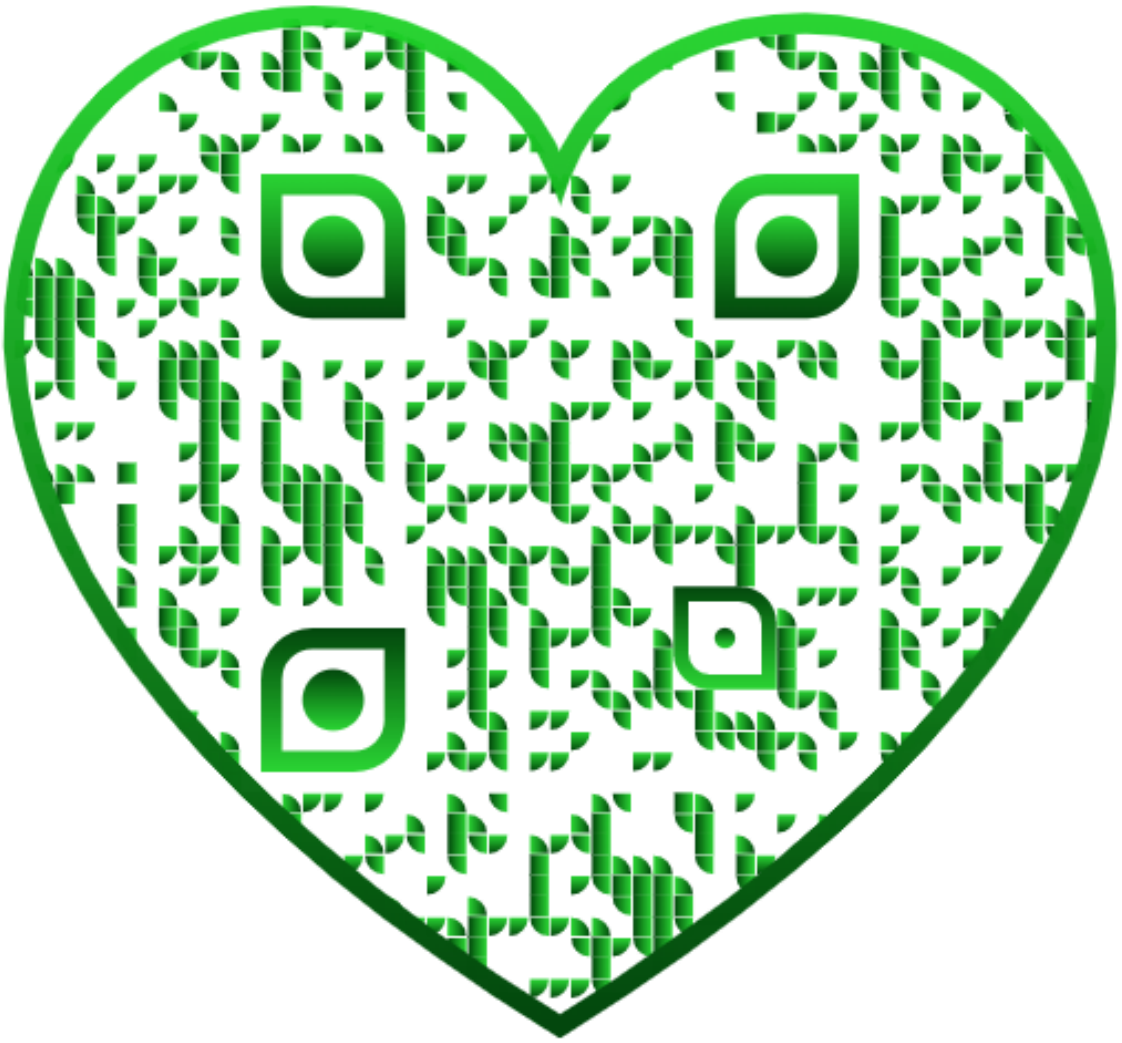
TELEPATHY, CLAIRVOYANCE AND PRECOGNITION

A Re-Evaluation of Some Fascinating Case Studies

ROBERT A. CHARMAN



TELEPATHY, CLAIRVOYANCE and PRECOGNITION

A Re-Evaluation of Some Fascinating Case Studies

Robert A. Charman

‘If you wish to upset
the law that all crows
are black, you mustn't
seek to show that
no crows are;
it is enough if you
prove one single crow
to be white.’
William James.

CONTENTS

Preface
Introduction
Chapter 1: Miss Phoebe Payne and the Gypsy Woman's successful prediction test.
Chapter 2: Sitters, mediums, and telepathic communication.
Chapter 3: 'Hello! Back Already?' Pilot M'Connel greets an apparition of Pilot Larkin.
Chapter 4: Samuel Clemens' dream foresees the metal funeral casket and body of his younger brother Henry.
Chapter 5: Mrs Wilmot crosses the stormy Atlantic during an Out-of-Body Experience to visit her husband in his cabin.
Chapter 6: The Chaffin Will Case: James Pinkney Chaffin receives a dream message from his dead father about a second Will.
Chapter 7: Mrs Agnes Paquet experiences a vision of her brother's death by drowning.
Chapter 8: Colonel Henderson sees an apparition of Captain Hinchliffe and hears him speak in great distress.
Chapter 9: 'Gail's Dream' in which she sees who her husband saw that same afternoon.
Chapter 10: 'Thoughts Through Space' The Wilkins and Sherman long range telepathy experiment from the Arctic to New York.
Chapter 11: The deceased writer C.S. Lewis twice visits Canon Phillips as a consoling apparition.
Chapter 12: Wilbur Wright sees the gloveless ghost of Air Gunner Stokes and Pilot Officer Worley's presentiment of death fulfilled on the same day.

Chapter 13: Identical Twins and Telesomatic Telepathy: When an uninjured twin feels the pain of their injured twin who is elsewhere.
Chapter 14: Sir Peter Masefield's reported flight with the ghost of Lieutenant Desmond Arthur who had died 50 years earlier.
Chapter 15: Robert Hambleton-Jones encounters an apparition in Glasgow Airport.
Chapter 16: Locating the address of a stolen harp through long distance map dowsing.
Chapter 17: Air Marshall Goddard sees a vision of deserted Gullane airfield in 1935 as it would look as RAF Drem in 1939
Chapter 18: The Goddard case and the author/reader relationship.
Chapter 19: Premonition and Precognition: The Future seen in the Present.
Chapter 20: When four Intuitives read Dr Mayer mind and she finds her sister's missing watch.
Chapter 21: Animal Psi: Alpha minds, the homing instinct and migratory impulse.
Chapter 22: Tying it all together.
References

Note. Details of original publication in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research (JSPR)* or *Paranormal Review* (*PR*) at end of relevant chapter.

PREFACE

Like many teenagers of my immediate post WW2 generation I read anything I could get my hands on. New Penguin and Pelican paperbacks thronged the bookshops in an explosion of titles during the late 1940s into the 1950s. New scientific discoveries were being made from radio astronomy to post atom bomb physics. There was promise of universal nuclear energy to medical advances, antibiotics, and Watson and Crick's 1953 discovery of the structure of DNA that unites every living thing. Roman archaeology was, quite literally. having a field day, as bomb sites were cleared, and the Mithras temple in London that I saw when I was a physiotherapy student was revealed. New discoveries were being made about Knossos and the Minoan civilisation of Crete, and decipherment of pre classical Greek Linear B clay tablets (written around 1500 BCE) by Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, initiated re-evaluations of the Mycenaean world of King Agamemnon, Homer's story of the Siege of Troy by the Greeks in the Iliad, and Odysseus's voyages as recounted in the Odyssey.

Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1946) was a revelatory introduction into some 2500 years of Western philosophical thought. New books on Buddhism and Eastern philosophy (I especially remember the book on Buddhism by the eminent judge Christmas Humphreys) sparked our interest in non Christian views of the world and our place in it. The discovery and decipherment of the Dead Sea Scrolls led to intense speculation as to their possible insights into the world of Jesus and the Gospels.

In the midst of all this I came across, and was fascinated by, G.N.M. Tyrrell's books, such as *Science and Psychical Phenomena, Apparitions, The Personality of Man, Homo Faber: A Study of Man's Mental Evolution*, published in the 1940s and early 1950s. Here was a mathematician, physicist, and radio engineer who had worked with Marconi saying that there was sound, scientific evidence for telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition (known collectively as Extrasensory Perceptions, or ESP), ghosts and apparitions. He had, for example, carried out experiments in which a participant would sit in front of four lamps and be asked to guess which one, randomly lit, would light next, and found that some volunteers consistently

‘guessed’ well beyond chance. This implied that they had some subconscious sense of what was to come, and this had now been confirmed experimentally. Something really exciting was going on!

In the mid 1950s I qualified as a Chartered physiotherapist, so the study of anatomy and physiology and the wide range of clinical specialties in which physiotherapy is involved took over and ESP took a back seat. From then until retirement in 2001 a busy clinical and managerial life in the NHS left little time for psychic phenomena beyond retaining a latent interest. In 1979 we moved to Wales, when I became a lecturer, and life was even busier.

On final retirement in 2001 from the then University of Wales College of Medicine (now incorporated into Cardiff University) and with my interest in ESP rekindled, I joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) and the Scientific and Medical Network (SMN), and went to conferences and study days. In 2006 I published my first article on telepathy in the peer reviewed *Journal* of the SPR. This was a two part review of the literature on electroencephalograph (EEG) studies of paired ‘sender/receiver’ volunteers where one acts as ‘sender’, in that they experienced flashes of light, or a sudden noise, that caused their brainwaves to jump as recorded by the EEG electrodes attached to their skull. These EEG records were then compared to the EEGs of the other volunteer acting as the quiet ‘receiver’ in another room, to see if they showed a brainwave jump at the same time. In many trials they did, despite the ‘receiver’ being completely unaware that anything had happened. This indicated that they were somehow in telepathic communication across space. The crucial factor was whether couples felt in complete rapport with each other. If they were strangers nothing happened.

Over the years many more articles were published, including reinvestigations of some famous cases such as the Samuel Clemens’ (Mark Twain) case and the Chaffin Will case (see chapters four and six) to see whether they were examples of ESP beyond reasonable doubt, or whether a non ESP explanation was the more likely answer.

This book includes a selection of previously published essays, now revised into chapter format, together with five new chapters. It contains some fascinating stories, and even if you disagree with my conclusions, you will enjoy reading them.

INTRODUCTION

Telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition, known collectively as Extrasensory Perception (ESP), are fascinating subjects that remain deeply controversial despite thousands of claimed and often verified ESP experiences (see Feather & Schmicker, 2005, Playfair, 2012) and, very importantly, hundreds of empirical research findings (see endnote). I have never, as far as I am aware, had an ESP experience, but people over the centuries of recorded history up to the present day, and by inference long before that, have repeatedly described such experiences that could not be explained by their circumstances at the time.

We need to be clear what we mean when we say that someone has had an ESP experience. During this experience the experiencer receives new information from another person (telepathy), or about an object or person (clairvoyance), or about an event that will occur (precognition), or about a past event (retrocognition), that has not come through any of their sensory systems such as sight, or hearing. The fact that we still have no explanation for these experiences does not mean that they do not happen, and is certainly not a good reason to deny that they occur. It should be remembered that the neurosciences still have no explanation how the bioelectric impulses streaming into the brain from our nervous systems are somehow converted by the bioelectrical circuitries of the brain into our conscious perception of vision, hearing, touch, taste and so on, but we seem agreed that conscious experiencing of such sensations occurs.

ESP is challenged by neuroscientists, mainstream psychologists and scientists in general on the grounds that the only possible source of new information to the brain, and then from brain to mind, is through the normal bodily senses. No new sensory input - no new information, so ESP as a non-sensory derived source of new information cannot happen. The mainstream neuroscience hypothesis is that as mental activity is somehow generated by physical brain activity, brain and mind, no matter what their apparent differences, must be of the same kind and are as one. The title of neuroscientist David Eagleman's book *The Brain: The Story of You* (2015), states this hypothesis as a fact, and on page five he says that '*Who* we are is

found within its intricate firing patterns of electrochemical impulses. When that activity stops, so do *you*. When that activity changes character due to injury or drugs, *you* change character in lockstep.' (my italics).

This statement is based upon the close correlation between brain activity and mental activity, but 'correlation' is not 'explanation'. No one, as yet, has any idea how the '*who*' that is you, me, and David Eagleman, emerges from the 'what' of our brain's 'intricate firing patterns of electrochemical impulses'. The two sets of activity, physical brain activity and mental activity, work in coordinated lockstep, and we know in great detail which areas of the brain are correlated with which mental activity, but the two sets of properties are completely different in kind. For example, our brains inside our skulls do not love or hate other brains inside their skulls because concepts such as 'love; and 'hate' do not apply to the neuro-electrophysiology of brain activity. But conscious minds can, and do, love and hate other conscious minds, because such emotions are part of the mental reality that is you and me. The difference between brain activity and mental activity is one of kind, not one of degree. The unsolved problem is how, if different in kind, which means that they have no discernible properties in common, the two can affect each other, but, somehow, they do.

This difference in kind is central to the possibility of ESP. If the mental reality of our minds has no physical properties, then unlike our brains, our minds are not bound by physical laws. The properties of mental reality can, and according to ESP experiences certainly do, include the possibility of direct mental access to sources of information independent of physical distance and everyday time. ESP is considered to be the expression of a mental faculty termed Psi that operates independently from the sensory systems, so telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition are known as psi phenomena.

Traditional arguments against parapsychology (the study of psi phenomena), as expressed in Wikipedia entries dismiss the whole subject as "pseudoscience". This dismissal is based upon the premise that if ESP existed then we would need to rewrite the laws of physics. But this argument is based upon a false premise. If mental properties are not physical properties they are not subject to the laws of physics so these laws do not apply. An analogy from everyday life may help to demonstrate the difference between the two. When someone is out of sight, your feelings about them do not increase or

decrease in strength according to how far apart you are. Distance apart is a physical variable between physical brains that obeys the laws of physics as in, for example, affecting the strength of a torch beam between you according to the inverse square law. But physical distance apart is not a mental variable in your emotional relationship with another person. With these preliminary thoughts in mind we can now consider this book.

I am a member of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) that was established in 1882 by a group of mainly Cambridge academics to inquire into psychical phenomena without prior judgement. Over the last sixteen years I have contributed essays on the subject of ESP and other manifestations of psi that have been published in the peer reviewed *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research,* or its sister companion the *Paranormal Review,* now renamed as *The Magazine* of the SPR. Some readers have kindly suggested that many of these essays would be of interest to a wider public, so I have included a selection from them revised into chapter format for a wider readership. If they are being read in sequence it must be remembered that they were often written and published years apart as noted in the original publication at the end of each chapter. Also included are five new chapters.

These essays have not formed part of a systematic investigation, but each has been occasioned by something that I have chanced to read about, or hear about, that caught my interest. For example, I attended a conference where speakers, including the distinguished chairman, repeatedly assured the audience that two of the cases discussed in this book have been thoroughly investigated and proved beyond all doubt to be classic examples of an Out-of-Body Experience (OBE), and a post-mortem communication, respectively (chapters five and six). Intrigued, I returned home determined to read up on these two cases for myself, from the original documentation to the opinions of later commentators, and was rather surprised at what I found.

This brings me to where this book differs from most other books on the subject that are usually in the form of anthologies of cases demonstrating this or that aspect of ESP. My essays have tended to be in the form of inquiries as to whether what is claimed to have occurred did occur, and if it seemed to me that the evidence indicates that it did, then whether it can best be explained by non-ESP explanations or an ESP explanation. The crucial point here is that for an experience to be accepted and quoted as a genuine ESP experience

no non-ESP explanation can account for it as well as, or better than, an ESP one. This does not mean that in some cases ESP could not have been the cause, but if a non-ESP cause is at least equally likely, then the verdict has to be ‘not proven’.

Each chapter title summarises what is said to have occurred. I then present what we know about the circumstances of its occurrence, discuss the pros and cons as to possible cause, including consideration of the opinions of other commentators, with the aim of arriving at a considered conclusion. In some cases my conclusion has been so unexpected that it left me, and still leaves me, in a state of what psychologists call ‘cognitive dissonance’ with the unanswered question of ‘Yes, but why?’ hanging in the air. In each case you will decide whether you agree, or disagree, with the way I have conducted my inquiry and come to my conclusions. But whatever your view you will find every case fascinating, often with completely unexpected twists and turns and revelations. In the final chapter ‘Tying it all together’ I review the ground we’ve covered in the light of a proposed a two states of mind hypothesis that I think offers an insight into the role of psi in the survival of many species over many generations.

Research Note

For those readers who are sceptical about the reality of ESP and, quite rightly, point out that while similar experiences are suggestive that something in common is happening, they do not, of themselves, meet the criteria of scientific proof, I can recommend three recent reviews of the published research literature indicating that psi, as in ESP, is a real phenomenon beyond reasonable doubt.

1. In their 2015 book *Evidence for Psi: Thirteen Empirical Studies* science writer Damien Broderick and mathematician Ben Goertzel (2015) present thirteen empirical studies demonstrating the reality of psi phenomena including ESP as in the form of presentiment of the future.

2. In his 2018 review of the experimental evidence for parapsychological phenomena, published in the lead journal *American Psychologist* and referencing over 700 research studies, Etzel Cardena, Thorsen Professor of Psychology, Lund University, Sweden, presents a detailed examination of the evidence demonstrating the reality of psi phenomena.

3. David Vernon, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Canterbury Christchurch University, provides another thorough review of the empirical literature in his 2021 book *Dark Cognition: Evidence for Psi and its Implications for Consciousness.* In his concluding discussion Vernon neatly sums up the evidence for psi phenomena by saying that '*The field of psi has clearly demonstrated consistency and replicability of effects. Hence, the continued rhetorical arguments stating that no evidence for psi exists are simply not tenable'* (p. 291).

References

Broderick, D., Goertzel, B. (2015). *Evidence for Psi: Thirteen Empirical Studies.* Jefferson, NC. McFarland & Co.

Cardena, E. (2018). The Experimental Evidence for Parapsychological Phenomena: A Review. *American Psychologist. 73* (5) 663-677

Eagleman, D. (2015) *The Brain: The Story of You*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Feather, S, R., Schmicker, M. (2005) *The Gift: The Extraordinary Paranormal Experiences of Ordinary People.* London. Rider.

Playfair, G, L. (2012) *Twin Telepathy (*3rd ed.) Guildford, UK. White Crow Books.

Vernon, D. (2021). *Dark Cognition: Evidence for Psi and its implications for Consciousness.* London. Routledge.

CHAPTER ONE

Miss Phoebe Payne and the gypsy woman's successful prediction test

One summer day in the mid 1930s Miss Phoebe Payne, a Londoner then in her mid forties, was motoring in the Scottish Highlands with her hostess and two friends when they came upon a newly arrived gypsy caravan encampment by the roadside. They drove past, and then decided on impulse to return and have their fortunes told. Miss Payne and one of her friends went into one of the caravans, and she now takes up the story:

> 'The swarthy, black-eyed woman asked me in the usual way to cross her palm with silver then she lightly touched my fingertips for a moment, shut her eyes and poured out a torrent of speech regarding my past. Eventually she began to foretell the future. It sounded incredible, not to say impossible. She sketched correctly the kind of professional life I was then living and said that it would change radically. "You will marry a man who is either a doctor, or is in a profession associated with sharp, bright instruments." She went on, adding details about him, "You will work together and neither of you will work alone in the future." She then foretold a number of events which would lead up to this. Then, guessing my doubts, she said, "You don't believe me, so I am going to tell you three unimportant things which will come true within the next seven days. When they do, you'll remember what the gypsy said, and you'll see that in the next few years big things will happen too." She then told me that I would very shortly receive a gift of stones; that I would be given a ring; and that on some very stony ground I would find two sprays of white heather where no other white heather grew.
>
> I said nothing of all this to my hostess, but that evening while I was dressing for dinner, she came into my room bringing a box of beautifully cut unset Cairngorm stones. She said, "I got these for you last Christmas, but you will remember that I had 'flu and was too ill to send them off. So here they are." Three days later a registered parcel arrived from London. It contained an old ring and a note from a friend that said, "I meant to leave you this ring in my will, but I don't see why you should not have it

> now, so I am sending it at once." Then on the fifth day we were out for a picnic and on the way home we went through a very desolate pass in the hills, and my hostess said: "There's a rather fine cairn just at the top of the hill. Let's climb up and have a look at it." I had nearly reached the top of the rough and stony track when I saw, growing in solitary beauty, two sprays of white heather. There was not another scrap in sight. I confess that I was impressed when these odd events came true exactly as foretold. I was still more struck when the larger issues developed, especially as they represented a turning point in my life such as I had never even contemplated.'

Miss Payne goes on to say that after her reading the gypsy turned to her friend, who then took her place and crossed the gypsy's palm with silver but 'was rewarded with nothing more than the usual fortune teller's gibberish which one so often meets at fairs and sea sides. There was nothing in it but commonplace generalisations while the bits of character reading were wide of the mark.' She comments that 'the striking thing was that one of us was treated to real and startling precognition while the other was given nothing of value. In the first case the gypsy seemed to have tapped into a live wire of information and could scarcely keep pace with what she saw, while in the second case it was as if one had put a coin into a machine and received a packet automatically and mechanically thrown out in return' (Payne & Bendit, 1950, pp. 158-161).

The difference in outcome between the two readings implies that the mindset of the sitter plays an important role in the fortune teller/client relationship. It may be that Miss Payne's friend was inwardly unwilling to have her fortune told, so she was mentally blocking the idea, and this resistance was reflected in her face and posture. If so, then the gypsy woman, sensing her resistance, was left with no alternative than to resort to practiced generalities, hoping that some would be recognised as applying to her client. In the case of Miss Payne her mind was open to the possibility that fortune telling was a genuine gift because, as she found out over time, she was a natural clairvoyant, and during the fortune telling it would seem that their minds were on the same wavelength. We now need to know more about Miss Payne.

Mrs Phoebe Daphne Bendit (née Payne)

Figure 1. Mrs Phoebe Bendit (née Payne)

Phoebe Daphne Payne (1889-1968) was an only child born into a poor family living in the slums of London's East End. Her father was an itinerant worker, so her education was endlessly interrupted as they moved from place to place. Despite this she had an intense thirst for education, probably fired by her mother who was a teacher, and she left home in her early teens. She was a born clairvoyant, but did not realise she was different from other people in this way until she was twenty and met a medium who recognised her gift. She became secretary of the Stead Bureau in London, set up by Estelle Stead, daughter of William. T. Stead, a pioneering newspaper editor interested in spiritualism, who was drowned in the Titanic disaster. The purpose of the Bureau was to study spiritualism. In the mid 1920s she moved on to become a member of the British College of Psychic Sciences, founded in 1920 by parapsychologist James Hewat McKenzie to identify genuine mediums, working alongside Mrs Eileen Garrett and other notable mediums of the day. During her time there she made an interesting discovery that still begs for follow-up mediumistic research. She discovered that if she imagined certain events clearly enough in her own mind, and held on to those images during a

mediumistic séance, the medium would inevitably relay them as if they were messages coming from post-mortem communicators (see Chapter Two for further discussion). When he heard about this, the Director of the College called Miss Payne into his office and told her she was not to practice this deception on mediums again. He gave her the stark option of falling back in line as a passive group member awaiting the medium's post-mortem communications, or leaving; she left, and an opportunity for genuine research was wasted.

She then joined the Theosophical Society, meeting many members of the professional classes, including doctors. Here she found that besides discovering a gift for psychometry, where she held an object and could sense and provide details of its previous owners, her clairvoyance seemed particularly tuned towards being a medical intuitive. She became used to doctors blind testing her intuitive diagnosis against their medically confirmed diagnosis. In her first book *Man's Latent Powers* (1938) she says that 'To be born a clairvoyant is an odd thing because one is quite unable to assess ordinary life without its counterpart of extrasensory perception. I do not remember a time when the visible world did not play into and through another world. I had no idea where one ended and the other began; they were both to me ordinary and natural and belonged together.'

During the 1930s she met Dr Laurence John Bendit (1898-1974), a fellow member of the Theosophical Society who, after qualifying as a doctor from Cambridge University, had specialised in psychiatry and opened up a practice in Harley Street in 1923. With a strong interest in psychical research he had joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), as he felt that much of the transaction between therapist and client included elements of telepathy and clairvoyance. In the early 1940s Dr Bendit was awarded his University of Cambridge MD for his dissertation, titled *Paranormal Cognition* and later published under that title. At the time of Miss Payne's meeting with the gypsy Bendit was just another member of the Theosophical Society, but some two to three years later they commenced working together, combining her clairvoyant gift with his knowledge of psychiatry and his Jungian approach to psychoanalysis. They married in 1939, living in London throughout the war, and wrote several books together, commencing in 1943 with *The Psychic Sense.* ;

From 1958 –1961 Dr Bendit served as General Secretary of the

Theosophical Society, and then accepted an invitation from its American branch to become Head of Education and Research at their headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois. He and Payne later moved to Ojai, California, where they revived the work of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy. During the late 1950s and early 1960s they travelled widely together on behalf of the Theosophical Society. Phoebe died in 1969, and his biographical tribute to her is very moving (Bendit, 1969). The *Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology* (1991) includes a short biography of the Bendits. With the history of their relationship in mind it would seem that the gypsy's long range foretelling of 'You will marry a man who is either a doctor, or is in a profession associated with sharp, bright instruments and you will work together and write books together. You will travel together and neither of you will work alone in the future' was remarkably accurate.

Discussion

The gypsy's offer to predict three things that would happen to Miss Payne within the next seven days is just the sort of objective test that any experimenter would be happy to devise. So confident was the gypsy that she could correctly 'see' the immediate and later future of this woman whose palm she was touching, that she had no hesitation in offering the test. Miss Payne, who was an experienced clairvoyant in her own right, said that it was as if the gypsy 'could scarcely keep pace with what she saw.' This is an interesting comment as it implies that in her 'mind's eye', as if on an internal screen, the gypsy woman was seeing images not only of Miss Payne's past, present and distant future, but also seeing images of the three items her sitter would perceive within the next few days, and recognise in retrospect as evidence of her precognitive ability.

It seems that when the gypsy was in her foretelling mindset she could distinguish between being able to 'tune into' the mental imagery of her sitter, or sense that she was unable to establish such a mental rapport. In the latter case, as with Miss Payne's friend, she would then be committed by the implied fortune teller/client contract of receiving payment to uttering a stream of what is known as 'cold reading' generalities in the hope that at least some of them would strike a positive chord in the sitter's selective memory. It is difficult to see how cold reading, based as it is upon interpreting what sitters

unwittingly reveal about themselves in appearance, voice and response, could ever pass a test foretelling specific objects or events within a given future time period.

Possible information leakage

We do not know what Payne and her friend told each other about their individual forecasts when they were on their journey home, but as the gypsy saw Miss Payne and her friend separately, and as she talked very rapidly, it is unlikely that her friend would have heard much of what she was saying. But even if Miss Payne had told people of the gypsy's forecast, and her hostess had acted on cue with regard to the Cairngorm stones, this would not account for the sequential arrival of the ring or of seeing those two isolated sprays of white heather and recognising them as specific to the foretelling. In fact, Payne states that she had not told her hostess, and this is likely to have included her friends as well.

While her account was not published until some fifteen years later, as it was relevant to the book *This World and That: An analytic study of psychic communicatio*n (1950) that she and Dr Bendit were writing together, she was in the habit of keeping notes. As she was already engaged in writing her first book about clairvoyance and mediumship at the time of the gypsy's foretelling, its successful outcome was almost certainly recorded for later reference. This possibility seems supported by her direct quotation from her friend's note accompanying the ring, and her clarity in recalling the occasion.

Does the future influence the present?

Does this successful foretelling carry implications concerning the apparently freely taken decisions by all concerned in its fulfilment? Were those decisions the result of individual free will, so that the gypsy's fulfilled prediction was a chance outcome? Or did the fulfilled prediction somehow 'reach back' to influence at some subconscious level the choice of those decisions as they were made? Let us look at the actions of those involved.

Of her own free will, the hostess could have posted the Cairngorm stones after Christmas as a belated present, or on Miss Payne's birthday, or given them to her on the first evening of her arrival, or on another evening, or as a parting gift. Her friend, some 300 miles away in London, could have left the gift of her antique ring in her will as she originally intended, or waited to

give it to her when they met on her return from holiday. But on one particular day for some unknown reason she suddenly decided to go to the trouble of writing a note, parcelling up the ring, and sending it by registered post to arrive three days after Miss Payne had received the Cairngorm stones. As for seeing the two sprays of white heather, in the fifth day of that week they were in the car, winding their way through the Cairngorms when their hostess suddenly recognised a hill she had climbed before, and suggested that they could stop and climb to the top to see the 'rather fine cairn'. It so happened that Miss Payne and her friends agreed to do so, but they could just as easily have said that they would rather keep going. On this particular hill these two sprays of white heather happened to have taken root alongside the path near the top in marked isolation from other heather, and Miss Payne happened to see them. Considered in a wider context of many alternative possibilities, they could have decided to keep driving instead of turning round to go back and have their fortunes read. They could have decided to take a different drive, or Miss Payne could have arranged to stay with her hostess on a different week. The fact is that none of many alternative decisions with their many alternative outcomes were made.

Does the coming together of those three events within the foretold seven-day period imply that those apparently free decisions taken by these five different people were influenced at some subconscious, intuitive, level of presentiment to ensure that they would occur as the gypsy forecast? If so, does this provide us with a glimpse of a general principle underlying our individual lives? Should we define the term 'future', not in terms of the unknown, but in terms of *what-will-eventually-be-experienced?* In this case, as an example, Miss Payne, her hostess, and her two friends experienced these events directly, and would have recognised them in retrospect as the fulfilment of that foretelling after she had told them the story. Her friend in London would have heard the story from Miss Payne on her return to London. She probably saw the Cairngorm stones as well as the ring on Miss Payne's finger, and realised with great personal interest the part her decision had taken in fulfilling the gypsy's forecast. The question is: do our *experiences-to-be* exert a retrospective influence on *what-we-are-deciding-to-do-today?* This question is discussed further in Chapter 19.

Are some people more psychic than others?

In his 2012 book *First Sight* Dr James Carpenter, an American psychologist and parapsychologist, has argued that there is an inherited spectrum of psi sensitivity ranging from a barely detectable intuitive influence through to clairvoyant episodes of strongly visualized precognition later confirmed. It is likely that such sensitivity and the form of its manifestation varies according to mood, circumstance and need. Some people, like the present writer, would have no conscious awareness of psi whereas, in marked contrast, for other people such as Miss Payne and the gypsy fortuneteller, psi in the form of clairvoyant awareness would be woven inextricably into the fabric of their daily lives. Payne's description of how she saw and interpreted the world is worth repeating: 'To be born a clairvoyant is an odd thing because one is quite unable to assess ordinary life without its counterpart of extrasensory perception. I do not remember a time when the visible world did not play into and through another world. I had no idea where one ended and the other began; they were both to me ordinary and natural and belonged together.'

The problem for the impartial investigator is one of identifying a genuine manifestation of psi, for which there is no adequate non psi explanation, such as coincidence, misinterpretation, or misreporting. Some precognitive clairvoyants such as the gypsy seem able to interpret their sense of *what-will-be-experienced* in terms of the personal future of their client. In this case, the gypsy woman found it easy to 'tune into' Miss Payne as Payne was already a clairvoyant. By contrast, it is possible that Payne's friend did not wish to have her future told, or thought that it was all nonsense, so erected a mental barrier. Such circumstances do not apply to those occasions when someone unexpectedly has a precognitive vision of an event that will happen to someone else.

If cause-and-effect is the only operative factor in our lives as well as in the physical universe, where things fall over if you topple them, and a smashed vase remains smashed, then the gypsy's successful prediction should not have occurred, because no such causes were present in the brief relationship between the gypsy and Miss Payne. They were two strangers who met and parted at apparent random. In cause-and-effect terms their relationship was brief and acausal. But was it? While cause-and-effect offers an adequate explanation for our daily lives when interacting with the physical world to achieve everyday objectives, it cannot explain feelings of presentiment and premonition that merge into the conscious imagery of a

later fulfilled precognition. The implication of precognition is that while cause-and-effect 'pushes' our everyday lives from behind, as it were, *what-we-will-experience* exerts a selective 'pull' on the sequencing of cause-and-effect that will allow that experience to occur.

Originally published: *Paranormal Review*. 70:14-22. (January, 2014) as 'Miss Phoebe Payne and the Gypsy Woman's Self-Devised Prediction Test: Exploring the Implications.'

References

Bendit, L, J. (1944) *Paranormal Cognition.* London, Faber & Faber.

Bendit, L. J (1969/2008) Profile: Phoebe Payne Bendit. *Psypioneer, Vol 4. No 10* pp. 225-231
(reprint from Parapsychology Foundation Newsletter Vol 16, No 5 (Sept-Oct 1969).

Carpenter, J,C. (2012) *First Sight: ESP and Parapsychology in Everyday Life.* Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield.

Gale (1991) *Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology.* 3rd ed.

Payne. P. (1938) *Man's Latent Powers.* London, Faber & Faber.

Payne, P. D. and Bendit, L. J. (1943) *The Psychic Sense.* (rev. ed. 1958) London, Faber & Faber.

Payne, P. D. and Bendit, L, J. (1950) *This World and That: An analytic study of psychic communication.* London, Faber & Faber.

CHAPTER TWO

Sitters, mediums and telepathic communication

In chapter one we discussed the case of Miss Phoebe Payne and the gypsy woman's accurate prediction that within the next seven days she would receive a gift of semi-precious stones, then a ring, and finally see two sprays of heather growing where no other heather grew. We also mentioned that Payne had discovered that if she imagined certain events clearly enough in her own mind and held on to those images during the mediumistic séance, the medium would inevitably include them and assume that they were passing on messages from people who had died. The possibility of such a telepathic relationship between the mind of the sitter and the mind of the medium forms the subject of this chapter.

Background

Members of the UK Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) who train as mediums at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall in Essex, believe their communications come from those who have physically died, but live on as conscious beings with their earthly memories intact and knowing what is happening to those they knew in this life. This belief is shared by their Spiritualist church congregations and by their clients in private sittings. Probably both sides would agree with the case for life after death as presented by Michael Tymn, Vice President of the Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies, in his 2011 book *The Afterlife Revealed: What Happens When We Die*.

This very understandable belief is reinforced when the communicator provides information known only to the sitter at the time, or not known at the time but discovered later to be correct. Despite this apparent confirmation the source of such communication remains a matter of much dispute. Sceptics, who believe neither in life after death nor anything claimed as paranormal such as telepathy, assert that during public and church meetings the real sources of communication are members of the audience responding to the medium's descriptive generalities in a way that allows them to convert those generalities into audience-volunteered specifics. During private sittings

sceptics assert that mediums rely on skilful ‘cold reading’ of the client, observing their age, dress and general appearance, interpreting their facial expressions, body language, way of speaking and response to various questioning hints thrown out by the medium and feeding that back to the client. This, they say, together with the client’s wishful highlighting of any information that seems to confirm their belief, is all that is needed. Skilled magicians such as Derren Brown have demonstrated this ‘cold reading’ ability time and time again.

Many authors, such as psychologists Alan Gauld and Tony Cornell in their 1982 book *Mediumship and Survival: A Century of Investigations***,** and psychologist David Fontana in his 2005 book *Is There An Afterlife?: A Comprehensive Overview of the Evidence,* have carefully evaluated the extensive literature (based upon note taking or recordings of what was said during controlled circumstances in small group or private séances) and consider that in many cases the information received could not have been acquired by cold reading alone. If this conclusion is correct, then besides lucky chance, or deceitful placing of stooges in the audience, there are only two possible sources from which the medium can obtain such information: the embodied minds of the sitters in front of them or the disembodied minds of the deceased the sitters are hoping to contact. Extra-sensory perception (ESP), as in telepathy, is likely to be posited as the agent conveying information from either source to the receptive mind of the medium who relays the message to the sitter.

The possibility of such direct mind to mind communication is dismissed by science in general, and the neurosciences and mainstream psychology in particular, because brains and minds can only obtain new information when it arrives through their sensory nervous system as in sight, sound and touch. But if, as Gauld, Cornell, Fontana, and many other investigators have claimed, there are many examples of mediums supplying information they could not possibly have known, the inference must be that the principle that new information can come only through the sensory systems is incorrect.

The research evidence indicates direct telepathic communication, either between the receptive mind of the medium and the active mind of the sitter, or the receptive mind of the medium and the active mind of the bodily deceased who is present at the sitting. If it is the former, then this is obviously

unintentional, as they are seeking information from the person who has died and is now on the 'Other Side'. But if it is the latter, then it must be through a deliberate intention by their disembodied mind to communicate with the sitter through the mind of the medium by telepathic transfer of information.

Recent studies by psychiatrist Dr Gary Schwartz, Director of the Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health (LACH), University of Arizona, using double-blind procedures concerning the percentage number of correct 'hits' by mediums under experimental circumstances against 'misses', seem suggestive of direct communication by the deceased - as described in his book *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life after Death* (2002), although the methodology and findings have come in for much criticism by sceptics. Ongoing research conducted by Drs Delorme and Julie Beischel (2013) at the Windbridge Institute in Tucson, Arizona, has been using EEG recording of brainwave patterns to try and detect any replicable difference in brain activity when mediums are relaying factual information about the deceased, compared to non-factual generalities. Findings indicate that the medium is in a different state of mind when communicating factual information that she could not otherwise have known. The first step in trying to resolve this debate is to determine whether a medium can obtain information held in the sitter's mind and relay it back to the sitter *as if* from the dead person, and as the minds of sitters seem more easily accessible than the minds of the deceased, we need to know what was in their minds during the séance.

Miss Phoebe Payne

The following experiment recounted by the clairvoyant Miss Phoebe Payne, later Mrs Phoebe Bendit, and briefly referred to in chapter one, indicates an experimental method by which this possibility could be put to the test. In the 1920s Payne was a member of Hewat McKenzie's British College of Psychic Sciences, London, founded to try and identify mediums of genuine ability. Miss Payne was often one of a group of sitters during séances. By chance, she happened to notice that if she imagined a narrative of events and people and held onto those strong images during the séance, the medium would, at some point, include and interpret them as messages they were receiving from someone on 'The Other Side'. Finding that this mental experiment was repeatedly successful, and finding that she was sitting with an experimentally

inclined circle that included an engineer, civil servants, architects and doctors, she decided on a test that would be open to public confirmation. Before one evening séance she told the engineer, a confirmed bachelor, that that she would see if she could get the medium to introduce an imaginary dead fiancé. During the séance the bachelor was addressed by a young woman, telling him that she was with him in death, as in life, that she still loved him and was guiding and looking after him from the spirit world (*This World and* That, pp. 107-110). Similar experiments by the group with different mediums obtained a similar response without the medium being aware of it. When a very annoyed Director of the College heard of these experiments, he summoned Miss Payne into his office and forbade her and the rather disillusioned group to do them again, thereby rejecting a golden opportunity for real research.

Payne also relates that during a conference she attended on mediumship ‘a well known novelist of the time’ (if only we knew who!) described to the audience a private sitting in which the medium had given her detailed messages from several apparently deceased persons, including their names and their historical circumstances. In reality, these were accurate descriptions of clearly visualised characters held in the mind of the novelist, imagined as living within the historical narrative of a novel she was writing at the time. The novelist went on to say that during the same séance the medium also relayed details of a very important conversation the novelist had been engaged in during the previous evening, and was still mulling over during the séance. From this it would seem that the medium the novelist consulted, and at least some of the mediums in the British College of Psychic Sciences when Payne was acting as a practice sitter, were able to ‘tune into’ the strongly held mental imagery of a sitter, or sitter group, when they had entered into the receptive state of mind of mediumship, and relay this imagery back in their sincerely held belief as evidence that they were receiving messages from the deceased.

Mrs Rosalind Heywood

Mrs Rosalind Heywood (1895-1980) was an experienced investigator of psychic phenomena, a former Vice President of the SPR, and author of two highly regarded books (*The Sixth Sense*, 1959, and *The Infinite Hive*, 1964). In her chapter *Death and Psychical Research* in Arnold Toynbee’s book

Man's Concern with Death (1968), Heywood recounts her own particular experience as a sitter under the subheading 'From whence does a medium get her information?'

> 'Soon after the Second World War I decided to test a medium by having an anonymous sitting with her and mentally asking for the fate of a German friend of whom I had heard nothing since 1938. He was a prominent man of great integrity and I feared that he must have been killed either by the Nazis or the Russians. He soon appeared to turn up at the sitting, gave his Christian name, spoke through the medium in character and reminded me of various pleasant experiences which he had shared with my family in America which I had forgotten. He said that he had been killed in grim circumstances which he did not want to talk about.
>
> After the sitting I made inquiries as to his fate. He was eventually traced by the Swiss Foreign Office to a neutral country and in reply to a letter from me he said that he had escaped both the Nazis and the Russians, had married, was living in two rooms and had never been so happy in his life. Here, then, it looks as if the medium, unknown to herself, was building a picture of the German from my conscious memories and my fears as to his fate.'

Given the result of Heywood's inquiry through her husband's contact in the Foreign Office at the end of the war, her conclusion that a medium can somehow access a sitter's thoughts and imagery and relay them back to the sitter in accurate detail seems fully justified. This finding, along with the findings of Phoebe Payne, carries the implication that strong emotional imagery in the minds of sitters may be the unwitting source of all such communications in the receptive minds of mediums. In the case of Mrs Heywood and her German friend we need to explore this possibility further.

What if he *had* been killed 'in grim circumstances?'

The interesting question is this: would the same conclusion have been drawn by Mrs Heywood, and probably by present readers, if she had discovered that he had been captured, tortured and executed by the Nazis? Would his comment that he had been 'killed in grim circumstances he did not want to talk about' be taken as confirmation that he was dead but wished to spare her unnecessary grief concerning the details? Would such a finding be considered as demonstrating that this sitting had provided excellent evidence of genuine communication from beyond the grave as the medium could not possibly have known this?

The answer is a very likely 'yes', as it would seem to be the only possible answer. At the time of the sitting Mrs Heywood did not know what had happened to him beyond imagining possible scenarios, and the medium could not have provided information about someone she did not know to someone she had never met before that sitting, unless it came from him. We need to explore the post-mortem communication option further.

Identifiers indicating communication from 'Karl' as a disembodied self

Even without mention of his death 'in grim circumstances he did not want to talk about' the information conveyed by the medium would seem to provide enough identifiers to convince even a wary sceptic, that on the balance of probabilities, this really was a genuine communication from a friend that Mrs Heywood once knew but was now dead. To explore this interpretation further we need to sit in Mrs Heywood's mind as she is sitting with the medium inwardly hoping, unknown to the medium, that her German friend would 'come through.' So let us personalise him and call him Karl.

The medium, who knows nothing about her anonymous sitter beyond her appearance, has supplied three identifiers that apply to Rosalind Heywood's friend Karl and to no other Karl:

- He greets Heywood by telling her that he is her pre-war German friend Karl (Heywood says that 'he soon appeared to turn up at the sitting' and 'gave his Christian name').
- He takes over control of the medium's voice so that she speaks with the same Germanic inflexions and way of using English grammar that Heywood remembers as peculiar to him (she says that 'he spoke in character').
- He recalls shared experiences between himself and Mrs Heywood and

> family while they were in America that only he, as her friend Karl, could possibly have known. In fact, he goes even further into self identification by reminding her of events which she had forgotten, but were still in her memory and now remembers in confirmation.

It is likely that these three very specific identifiers alone would be sufficient to convince even an initially sceptical sitter that it really is their erstwhile friend Karl who is 'coming through'. After all, who else could it possibly be? How else could the medium have communicated such specific detail about someone who, as we have said, she could not possibly have known had ever existed, to someone she had never met before the sitting, if it was *not* Karl speaking through her to Rosalind, and controlling her voice so that she was speaking very convincingly 'in character'?

Concerning a fourth possible identifier we need to return to Heywood's account. She knew that Karl had returned to Germany in 1938 and being a 'prominent man of great integrity' held strong anti-Nazi views. If he had been reported as publicly expressing such views during the war, this would have brought him to the attention of the ever vigilant Gestapo, leading to his arrest and almost certain torture and death as an example to others. This is what Heywood, in various imagined scenarios, feared had happened to him as to so many others. She had also considered the possibility that he might have been killed by the Russians during the massive Soviet invasion of Germany in early 1945.

The social context of the sitting

This sitting must also be placed in its very immediate social context. It took place 'soon after the war', probably late 1945 or early 1946, in a Europe awash with millions of homeless refugees, devastated cities, forces of allied occupation, a search for Nazi war criminals, and a world appalled by endless revelations of Nazi atrocities, with newsreel films of death camps, crematoria, the death railways, huge piles of dead and dying being bulldozed by troops into mass graves, and harrowing stories from the survivors. Given this post-war knowledge the final statement that follows would fall into place as a strong circumstantial identifier: he said that he had he been killed in 'grim circumstances that he did not wish to talk about.'

It would be reasonable to infer from this statement that Karl had been

murdered by the Nazis and was now a disembodied, self-aware being, with all his memories of life on earth still intact. Unknown to Rosalind Heywood, he had remained in mental contact with her and knew that she had booked a sitting with this medium in the hope of finding out what had happened to him, and he was determined to contact her during the sitting.

In summary, we now have four very strong identifiers to support a very reasonable conclusion that the communicator really was the deceased Karl. There is a strong possibility that most people, even former sceptics, would now feel that we have all the information necessary to come to a definite conclusion that the spirit of the murdered Karl had communicated through the receptive mind of the medium to his former friend Rosalind. Given this level of circumstantial information, this account would easily meet the criteria for inclusion in collections of mediumistic communications supporting the belief that the bodily dead are mentally alive and well, and can contact the living through the receptive minds of mediums.

The problem

The problem in this case is that he was very much alive, happily married and living in two rooms in a neutral country. This new information makes a strong case for Heywood's later conclusion that the medium's communications matched her store of mutual memories and vividly imagined fears of what might have happened to Karl back in Nazi Germany. Unknown to Mrs Heywood and the medium at the time of the séance, the medium was relaying back to her a version of what was in her own mind. If we believe in life after death this raises the question of how we can exclude the mind of the sitter as the most likely source of communication.

A disbeliever in the possibility of direct mind to mind communication between anyone alive, let alone when one of them is dead or thought to be dead, will say that the only fact common to all mediumistic communications during sittings is 'cold reading' combined with a sitter's selective memory following the sitting. The medium accurately 'reads' the appearance and responses of the sitter and uses their imaginative facility to construct a story that answers the sitter's emotional needs. When faced with a grieving sitter who just wants confirmation that their loved one is still alive this may be

easy to do, and the sitter's memory of what was said will be very selective in support of this belief.

With Mrs Heywood, however, the situation was very different. Booking as an anonymous sitter she had decided to test this particular medium to see if she could communicate anything about her previous friend we have called Karl. Like Phoebe Payne she was holding strong emotional imagery in her mind concerning Karl, and fears as to what might have happened to him. As an experienced investigator she would have been very well aware of the trap of cold reading, so it seems unlikely that she would have given anything away. Again, instead of just accepting the outcome of this sitting as providing strong evidence in favour of post-mortem communication beyond reasonable doubt, Mrs Heywood decided to check through her husband's Foreign Office contacts whether there was any official record of what had happened to Karl after his return to Germany and whether he was still alive – and he was.

If we accept Heywood's and Payne's accounts as they stand, it does seem that when a person is trained to enter into the receptive mindset of mediumship they can access the imagery in the mind of the sitter. It may be that such thoughts and imagery in the sitter need to exceed a certain threshold of emotional intensity and vividness, and the medium needs to have entered into a reciprocal 'tuning in' state of mental receptivity for that same imagery to enter their minds and then be fed back to the sitter and interpreted as communication from 'The Other Side'. If neither one, or the other, of these two sets of sitter/medium psychological variables is present at a critical level for sitter-to-medium communication to occur, then the result will be nothing more than nonspecific generalities. Given this likely possibility of sitter-to-medium imagery transmission, whether it can ever be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that a medium has entered into mental contact with a person who has died seems far less certain.

Dr Roxburgh's mediumship experience

When Elizabeth Roxburgh was Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Northampton and course leader for the BSc Psychology and Counselling degree, she was awarded her PhD for research exploring the phenomenology and psychology of Spiritualist mental mediumship. In May, 2006, she joined some 80 people hoping to develop their mediumistic potential through attending

a week long course on “Mediumship, Spirit awareness and developing your potential.” The course was held at the large and imposing Arthur Findlay College of Psychic Science, set in magnificent grounds near Stansted, Essex. It consisted of group sessions, workshops and tutorials, including early morning guided meditation, all led by experienced course tutors who were themselves practicing mediums. Group sessions involved working in small groups with different members of the group taking on the role of medium, or working in pairs in which each undertook the role of sitter and medium.

In her discussion of her experiences (Roxburgh, 2006) she says that during one group session another sitter, whose turn it was to be medium and who knew nothing about Roxburgh’s personal life, said that Roxburgh had a brother, and then gave his name. As Roxburgh says, ‘the statistical probability that I have a brother is high, but to get his name from countless possibilities was impressive to me.’ Dr Roxburgh had initially found assuming the role of receptive medium very difficult. In her professional life she was accustomed to being mentally very active in conducting research and undertaking interpretation and analysis, whereas during the period of mediumship all such everyday mental activity has to be set aside so that you can enter a neutral, receptive mindset, and accept and say whatever images come unbidden into your mind.

She eventually found this was easiest for her to do if she closed her eyes. On one particular occasion it became her turn to be the medium when working as a pair. Having closed her eyes and entered into a receptive state of mind, her first strong impression was of a grandfather clock with the hands stopped at 4pm, followed by seeing terrier dogs, then muddy boots, a walking stick and a wheelbarrow. She then received the name Charles or Charlie, and smelt fresh cut grass while experiencing physical sensations of having difficulty in breathing, combined with a fast heart rate.

In response to Roxburgh’s impressions, the sitter said that his father used to make clocks and had given him a grandfather clock that kept stopping, that he did have three terrier-like dogs, muddy boots, a walking stick, a big garden, and needed a new wheelbarrow as his wheelbarrow had recently been stolen. The sitter went on to say that he thought his grandfather was called Charles or Charlie, and that either his father or grandfather (Dr Roxburgh couldn’t remember which) had been cutting grass when he first experienced chest and heart symptoms and later suffered a heart attack.

While any one or two images taken from this series of related images could be taken as referring to the sitter by chance co-incidence (the most likely ones being, perhaps, the boots and the walking stick), taken collectively as a related set they seemed to apply specifically to him well beyond any interpretation of chance coincidence. Unknown to Roxburgh he could have had a whole range of alternative lifestyles. He might have lived in a flat, or in a town house with a small back yard He might have owned a large dog instead of three terriers, or had cats, or kept fish, or had no pets. He might have been completely uninterested in gardening beyond mowing the lawn.

As Roxburgh says: ‘While many sons may have fathers interested in clocks, even to the extent of mending them, few are likely to have fathers who possessed sufficient expertise and patience to actually make them, and fewer still whose father had made and then given their son a grandfather clock that, in this case, usually stood still. While Charles or Charlie is a fairly common name, the association between the smell of newly cut grass together with experiencing chest and heart symptoms probably applied to the client’s father who had described his experience rather than the grandfather, and it is this that had remained in the sitter’s emotional memory. Thinking about the odds I realised that none of this set of related images applied to myself, nor to some fifteen or so male friends and acquaintances beyond, maybe, having a walking stick, and none to my knowledge who had a father who had experienced a heart attack whether or not related to cutting grass.’

Dr Roxburgh’s fledgling experience as a medium supports the probability that she had been receptive enough to receive strong visual images from the mind of her sitter. The accounts by Miss Payne, Mrs Heywood, Dr Roxburgh and the unknown novelist of their experiences when acting as sitters, and Dr Roxburgh when acting as a medium, indicate that the following proposed experiment might help settle the issue.

A proposed experiment

Such strong and consistent findings, both as sitter and medium, beg for a replicable type of experiment that was first performed by Miss Payne and her group. What if, in a series of seances, a group of strong visualisers, for example artists, novelists and poets, agreed on the imaginative details of a story, including the sequencing of the narrative to be mentally imagined

during the séance, and then acted as sitters to record whether the medium included that story during the séance or not? What if, in another experiment, one of them strongly imagined a story (written down and kept in a sealed envelope until after the séance) which was not known to the rest of the group, who were asked to imagine a white wall without any emotional interest? What if, in each case, the medium repeated enough details of the group story, or the strongly imagined individual story, or of seeing a blank white wall that went well beyond any possibility of chance coincidence?

If such findings were confirmed, this would imply that the most likely source of a medium's communication was in the minds of sitters rather than the disembodied minds of the dead. Such findings would also confirm beyond reasonable doubt that direct mind to mind communication occurs, offering strong support for the hypothesis of ESP as a genuine psi phenomenon. It must be remembered that no one who is bereaved arranges a sitting with a medium and then sits there with a blank mind. They are sitting there in an expectant state of mind, full of emotionally charged images of the person, or persons who have died, full of memories of their time together and imagined scenarios as to where they are now and who they are with.

Chapter developed from *JSPR* correspondence and further research.

References

DeLorme, A., Beischel, J., Michel, L., Bocuzzi, M., Radin, D, Mills, P, J. (2013) Electrocortical activity associated with subjective communication with the deceased. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 20th, November. doi: 10.3389/fpsg.2013.00834.

Fontana, D. (2005) *Is There An Afterlife: A Comprehensive Overview of the Evidence.* Ropley, UK. O Books.

Gauld, A. Cornell, A, D. (1982) *Mediumship and Survival: A Century of Investigations.* London. Heinemann.

Hart, H. (1959) *The Enigma of Survival. The Case For and Against an Afterlife.* London. Rider & Co.

Heywood, R. (1959) *The Sixth Sense,* London, Dutton & Co. (published in America as *Beyond The Reach Of Sense: An Inquiry into Extra-Sensory Perception*).

Heywood, R. (1964) *The Infinite Hive*: *A Personal Record of Extrasensory Experiences.* London. Dutton & Co. (Published in America as *ESP: A Personal Memoir*).

Heywood, R. (1968) Death and Psychical Research. In *Man's Concern with Death*. Toynbee A.

Payne, P. D., and Bendit, L, J. (1950) *This World and That: An analytic study of psychic communication.* London. Faber & Faber.

Roxburgh, E, C. (2006) Mediumship, Spirit awareness and developing "your potential." *Parapsychology Review*. Issue 40: 18-23.

Schwartz, G, E., Simon, W. L. (2002) *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life after Death.* New York, Pocket Books.

Tymn, M. (2011). *The Afterlife Revealed: What happens When We Die.* Guildford, UK. White Crow Books.

Toynbee, A. (1968). *Man's Concern with Death.* London, Hodder & Stoughton.

CHAPTER THREE

‘Hello! Back Already?’ Pilot Larkin greets an apparition of Pilot M’Connel.

According to the many websites and blogs that appear in response to entering ‘Pilot Larkin and pilot M’Connel’s ghost’ or similar, there is unanimous agreement that Larkin saw an apparition of pilot M’Connel that existed as an entity in its own right at the moment of M’Connel’s death. The same conclusion is arrived at in books presenting the case for the independent existence of ghosts and apparitions, taken as spectral evidence for personal survival after death. Sceptics, of course, deny the existence of ghosts and apparitions no matter what the evidence to the contrary, so rarely bother to comment on individual cases.

To an inquirer willing to accept the possibility that ghosts and apparitions may exist in their own right, this case is of particular interest as it is quoted repeatedly in the literature as a prime example of a crisis apparition that was seen as such by the percipient and confirmed by others. To assess whether this was a crisis apparition (defined as the spirit or ghost of the person seen within twelve hours of the crisis happening, in this case death) we need to establish what is known about Lieut. James M’Connel’s death (not ‘McConnel’ or ‘McConnell’ as given in most reports); the details of Lieut. David Larkin’s apparitional experience, and the physical and psychological circumstances in which his experience occurred.

The operational context

Lieut. Larkin’s experience of apparently seeing M’Connel’s apparition occurred less than four weeks after the signing of the Armistice on the 11th November, 1918. Units of the RAF had commenced returning from Europe to bases across Britain, including a squadron of Sopwith Camel fighters to RAF Scampton airfield, some 6 miles northwest of Lincoln. Among its young pilots were Lieut. Larkin, Lieut. M’Connel (aged eighteen), Lieut. Gerard Garner-Smith and Lieut. Mowat Hillman. On the morning of Saturday, 7th

December, Lieut. M'Connel received instructions to fly a Sopwith Camel from Scampton to RAF Tadcaster airfield near Leeds in Yorkshire, a journey of some 60 miles as the crow flies. He was to be accompanied by another officer flying a two-seater Avro trainer with a cruising speed of around 60-70 mph, and return to Scampton with the pilot. The Sopwith Camel (see images online) was a single-seater fighter nicknamed the 'Camel' because of the curved mounting over the guns to protect them from the weather. It was powered by a rotary engine, meaning that the engine with attached propeller revolved at high speed around a stationary camshaft. In the Sopwith Camel this produced a strong gyroscopic force to the right and the pilot had to exert continuous corrective control to
the left. Despite this it was highly manoeuvrable in combat, but very tiring to fly, leaving them physically exhausted in less than two hours.

The flight.

After receiving his instructions M'Connel returned to the room he shared with Larkin at around 11.30 am to tell him about the flight, saying that he expected to be back in time for afternoon tea. The two planes took off under thick cloud at about 11.35 am and set a northwesterly course towards Tadcaster airfield. If we assume a cruising speed of 60-70 mph, the flight should have taken about an hour, so after lunching at Tadcaster they would have returned to Scampton airfield soon after 3 pm in time for tea. As they approached RAF Doncaster airfield, Yorkshire, which was on their route to Tadcaster, they ran into rapidly thickening fog and decided to land there so that M'Connel could telephone his Flight Commander for instructions. He was told that they should use their own discretion whether to return or continue. With about another 25 miles, or 25 minutes flying time, they decided to continue without stopping to eat as they could lunch on arrival at Tadcaster.

When they set off again it was probably around 12.30-12.45pm. The fog became increasingly thick and after a few more miles the Avro pilot had to make a forced landing, with M'Connel circling low overhead until he saw that the pilot was safe. M'Connel then continued his flight, which should have taken no more than another 15-20 minutes to arrive about 1pm at Tadcaster, but he must have become increasingly disorientated in the thick fog. Some two hours and forty minutes after leaving Doncaster (so some 160

extra miles of flying unless he touched down at intervals to rest) he happened to be less than half a mile from RAF Tadcaster when a young woman saw his plane come out of the fog side-slipping on one wing downwards, levelling off for a short distance, and then nose diving into the ground with the engine full on. As M'Connel was thrown violently forward, his helmeted head struck the gun mechanism in front of him and he died instantly, his watch stopping at 3.25 pm.

Lieut. Larkin's account of M'Connel's apparitional experience.

Back at Scampton Lieut. Larkin had returned to his room after lunch, closing the door behind him and lighting the stove as the winter day was cold and damp. He spent the afternoon smoking his pipe, first writing some letters and then settling down in his armchair to read in front of the warm open stove. At some time between 3.15 to 3.30 pm he heard someone walking along the corridor outside, then he heard his door, which was about eight foot behind his chair, open with the 'usual noise and clatter that David always made' and heard him say 'Hello, boy'. Larkin half turned in his chair to see M'Connel standing half in and half out of the room, still holding the doorknob. He was dressed in full flying clothes, his naval cap pushed to the back of his head, and he was smiling as usual. (M'Connel had begun his flying career in the Royal Naval Air Service before it was amalgamated with the Royal Flying Corp on the 1st of April, 1918 to become the RAF, and had kept his naval flying uniform and cap, which he often wore around the base.) In answer to M'Connel's cheerful 'Hello, Boy' Larkin said 'Hello! Back already?' and M'Connel replied 'Yes, got there alright and had a good (or fine) trip'. Then with Larkin still looking at him, he said 'Well, Cheerio!', shut the door just as noisily and went away.

Larkin returned to his book, assuming that M'Connel had gone to the crew room to take off his flying gear and then look in on other friends for a chat. At around 3.45 pm Lieut. Gerard Garner-Smith came in to see him, saying that he hoped M'Connel would be back early, as they were going into Lincoln for the evening. Larkin replied that M'Connel was back already, as he had seen him a few minutes earlier, so Garner-Smith went off to look for him. Later that afternoon Larkin went into the mess room for tea and then returned to his quarters to change before going into Lincoln for the evening to join others in the smoking room of the Albion Hotel. While there he

overheard some officers saying that a Sopwith Camel had crashed near RAF Tadcaster that afternoon and heard the name ‘M’Connel’. He felt that there must be some mistake as he had seen M’Connel on his return, so he initially assumed that M’Connel must have been ordered to make a second flight to Tadcaster and had then crashed. When he joined the group and heard that M’Connel’s watch had stopped at 3.25 pm he was left in a state of stunned disbelief, as this could not be true. Next morning he went to see Garner-Smith to discuss his strange experience. Although Garner-Smith argued that he must somehow have been mistaken, Larkin remained convinced that he had seen M’Connel at around 3.20 to 3.30 pm on the previous afternoon, but was at a complete loss as to any rational explanation.

The aftermath

In a letter dated the 16th January, 1919, M’Connel’s father wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge, an eminent scientist who was known to be very interested in such matters, enclosing a letter by Lieut. Larkin and two statements, one from Garner-Smith and one from Lieut. Mowat Hillman. The latter had attended M’Connel’s funeral on the 11th December and had told M’Connel’s parents about Larkin’s strange vision of seeing their son. M’Connel’s father had then written to Lieut. Larkin to ask for an account of his experience, and Larkin had replied on the 22nd December. Besides writing a full description, he enclosed a statement by Lieut. Garner-Smith to the effect that it was a true record of what Larkin had told him on the 7th December. Lieut. Hillman, who had not been back to Scampton since the funeral, read Larkin’s letter while visiting M’Connel’s parents and signed a separate note confirming that this is what he had been told by Larkin, who was definitely not the sort of person to make up such a story. At this point it is worth quoting from Larkin’s letter to Mr M’Connel as included in Brian Inglis’s review of the case (Inglis, 1962, p 75). 'As you can understand Mr M’Connel I was at a loss how to solve the problem. There is no disputing that he had been killed whilst flying to Tadcaster, presumably at 3.25 as we ascertained that his watch had stopped at that time. I tried to persuade myself that I had not seen or spoken to him in this room, but I could not make myself believe otherwise, as I was undeniably awake and his appearance, voice, and manner had all been so natural. I am of such a sceptical nature regarding things of this kind that even now I wish to think otherwise that I did not see him, but I am unable to do

so.'

In his discussion Inglis points out that only two other ex R.N.A.S officers at Scampton were entitled to wear naval caps, and as neither bore the slightest resemblance to M'Connel so it was not a case of mistaken identity (p. 75).

With Mr M'Connel's consent Lodge passed the correspondence on to Eleanor Sidgwick, Honorary Secretary, Society for Psychical Research (SPR), who then wrote to Lieut. Larkin asking him to confirm details, including the standard of lighting in his room and possible shadows. In his reply, dated the 27th June, 1919, Larkin, now based near Blandford, Devon, said that the room was quite small, being about 12 feet square, the electric light cast a clear light without any shadows and a good fire was burning in the open stove. We now need to consider the status of M'Connel's apparition.

The case for M'Connel's apparition as a crisis apparition at time of death

The close co-incidence in timing between M'Connel's death and Larkin's experience of seeing his apparition is the central argument for concluding that M'Connel's appearance falls into the category of crisis apparitions. According to this interpretation the co-incidence in timing had created a causal relationship that momentarily connected M'Connel's mind at the moment of his death with Larkin's mind in the form of M'Connel's apparitional appearance in the doorway. The implication of this interpretation is that Larkin would not have experienced seeing and talking to M'Connel's apparition if M'Connel had landed safely at RAF Tadcaster.

The argument is seen as receiving further support from Larkin's certainty that he had been 'undeniably wide awake' at the time. Arthur Berger (1988, p.20), an American lawyer, argues that because Larkin says he was wide awake when 'this clearly externalised apparition' appeared, the co-incidence of timing implies that it really was a crisis apparition. Author Ian Wilson (1995, p.60) came to the same conclusion, saying that 'it was only later that evening that Larkin heard that his room-mate had died in Tadcaster and thus realised he had seen M'Connel's ghost'. Colin Wilson (1985, p.124) also accepts the crisis interpretation and in his later brief review of the same case (1988, p.359) says that 'his ghost seems to have had no problems opening a door and holding a brief conversation'. Andrew Mackenzie (1983,

pp. 25-28) agrees that it was a crisis apparition, pointing out that Eleanor Sidgwick (1922) in her magisterial review of some 200 cases, considered it as ‘perhaps the best evidenced death coincidence in the present collection’ (ibid, p.152). Mackenzie also mentions that Donald West, who he refers to as a ‘most sceptical investigator’, said that this case was unusually well corroborated and ‘indeed there are few others in the SPR collection which reach the same standard’ (West, 1954, pp. 36-37).

Michael Schmicker (2002, pp. 223-224) agrees, saying that ‘it had a reliable, no-nonsense witness whose claim was confirmed by another independent witness, and the details were written down in detail very shortly afterwards when memories were still fresh.’ W.H. Salter (1938, pp. 58-61), then Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, thought that at the moment of the fatal crash M’Connel might have imagined that he had landed safely at RAF Tadcaster and was back at RAF Scampton again (presumably conveying that imagery to Larkin by telepathy). Eleanor Sidgwick (ibid, p.160) also thought that such a moment of dream imagery was a possibility. In summary, according to this interpretation of Larkin’s experience M’Connel’s sudden death was the causal agent for Larkin’s perception of his safe return.

As, perhaps, befits a philosopher, Charles. D. Broad is more ambivalent, pointing out that we do not know whether Larkin’s experience happened immediately before or after M’Connel’s death. As what he terms Larkin’s ‘hallucinatory *quasi*-perception’ of M’Connel looked absolutely normal to Larkin, Broad felt that the image might have been supplied by Larkin himself as the percipient, but equally, if M’Connel had swooned just before the crash, then the same ‘*quasi*-percept’ might equally well have corresponded to M’Connel’s dying ‘dream image’ of arriving back safely in his room with Larkin in time for tea - a concept in line with Salter and Sidgwick’s speculations. Broad concludes (1962, p.135) that ‘if we admit the possibility that a person’s personality persists after bodily death’ then Larkin’s *quasi*-percept ‘might correspond to a delusion in M’Connel’s mind about himself immediately after his sudden and violent separation from his body’ (presumably a crisis apparition created by M’Connel thinking he was physically still alive and safely back with Larkin in RAF Scampton).

Two problems

Two major problems arise over claims that a crisis apparition is an actual manifestation of the spirit of the person who has physically died. Firstly, as in this case, how does a disembodied mind re-materialise as an apparently living body fully clothed in thick flying gear that reflects light, that is able to make the sound of walking down a passageway, turn a doorknob, noisily open a door, engage in conversation which involves breathing and voice control, noisily shut a door, and then dematerialise? All such actions require expenditure of real physical energy as exerted by a real physical body. Secondly, if the cause was a comforting 'dream image' of being back at base in their room then it would have been drawn from M'Connel's memory of looking *into* the room at the welcoming face and figure of Larkin as he turned round in his chair to respond to his greeting, whereas the apparition appeared as Larkin would have expected to see him from his memory of previous entries, an image that could not have been in M'Connel's memory. Also, it is difficult to see how M'Connel could possibly have imagined that he had arrived safely at RAF Tadcaster when his last conscious experience was of being lost and diving towards the ground in a thick fog.

The case for M'Connel's apparition being a hallucinatory dream image.

While, as Mackenzie has pointed out, West agrees that this case is well corroborated, the implication that West (then Professor of Clinical Criminology, University of Cambridge) felt that this corroboration supported the apparitional interpretation is not correct. He argues that Larkin's experience was probably a hallucination based upon anticipation, rather than, as he put it 'the most naïve theory that it was M'Connel's ghost that Larkin saw, a quasi-physical phantom that was sufficiently tangible to open a door and make a noise. Now it will be remembered that the apparition was said to have closed the door after it, thus leaving things as they were before it appeared. This is in line with the general rule that apparitions never leave behind physical traces of their visits. There are no footmarks and no displaced objects' (p.27). The likely counter argument by those who argue that Larkin did see a self existing crisis apparition would probably be along the lines that this is precisely what genuine quasi-physical crisis apparitions do!

Larkin's circumstances as proposed causative factors of the vision

Whatever the theoretical argument over the possible nature of apparitions, the issue in this case is whether the physical and psychological circumstances in which Larkin saw M'Connel's apparition were the causative factors that shaped his experience. What is proposed here, in agreement with West's speculation, is that these two sets of circumstances combined at a brief moment of time to become the joint causal agent determining this particular experience, and it is very unlikely that he would have seen M'Connel's apparition otherwise. It must be remembered that at the time Larkin had no reason to feel any concern about M'Connel, as this was just a routine flight and he expected his friend to return at around mid afternoon. When, therefore, he experienced the apparent return of his friend at about that time he was not surprised, because M'Connel's footsteps, his noisy opening of the door, his appearance (including wearing his naval cap pushed back on his head instead of the rather heavy and uncomfortable RAF helmet), his cheerful greeting, his own reply as he turned round in the chair, and M'Connel responding by saying that he had 'Got there all right, had a good (or fine) trip' were all exactly what he would have expected his friend to do and say before noisily shutting the door again on leaving.

As already mentioned, after lunch Larkin returned to the small room he shared with M'Connel, shut the door, lit the open stove, and sat down to write a few letters. He then settled down to read while sitting some three to four feet away from the front of the open stove in a warm and probably increasingly stuffy room filled with pipe smoke (in his reply to Mrs Sidgwick, Larkin says that the room was about twelve foot square and the door was about eight foot behind his chair). What is proposed here, as West has pointed out, is that Larkin was expecting M'Connel's return at any minute. This expectation would have been in the form of familiar imagery of his usual noisy entry. While in this state of mind it seems very likely that Larkin, quite unwittingly, drifted off into a light doze between 3.15 to 3.30 pm. While dozing he may have been dimly aware of footsteps in the passageway and maybe voices outside. In a pre-waking hypnogogic state his expectant imagery was converted into a hallucinatory dream re-enactment of M'Connel's return, with himself half turning round to see him, and the expected brief exchange confirming that his friend had had a good trip before he returned to consciousness, unaware that he had even drifted off. He then continued to read his book. It may be relevant to this interpretation that the

pilots had been to a dance over drinks in Lincoln the night before and returned late. This had led to M'Connel oversleeping, missing parade and missing breakfast, the latter probably being a contributory factor in his death (Sidgwick, ibid, p.153).

As far as Larkin was concerned, he *had* seen M'Connel, so when Lieut. Garner-Smith called in some 15-20 minutes later to inquire if M'Connel had returned, he said 'Yes', because in a very real hallucinatory sense he had seen him and was quite certain that he had been awake. When he heard the news of his death that evening he was in a state of complete shock. How could he possibly have seen him, when he now knew that M'Connel must have been dead at that time? For him, and presumably for his fellow officers who heard about his experience, and maybe even for M'Connel's grieving parents, the only possible answer was that he must have seen M'Connel's apparition as a final gesture of farewell.

Discussion

Anecdotal cases claiming to be examples of seeing ghosts or apparitions 'out there' in their own right are not accepted as having scientific validity in themselves, as they could be an error of interpretation. What they do indicate is that there exists a class of experiences that share enough features in common to be worthy of investigation by parapsychologists and by psychologists studying anomalous experiences.

However, for the general public it is a very different matter. Reading anthologies of such cases can have a very influential effect in creating strongly held belief systems concerning the nature of self, our relationships with each other, and whether we survive death as self aware individuals and can sometimes contact friends and relatives left behind. Those who present cases such as this carry a responsibility to ensure that all the factors involved are presented fairly and that their possible effect on what is claimed to have occurred is taken into account before arriving at a conclusion. If they do not do so then readers may unwittingly base their beliefs on errors of interpretation or inaccurate reporting of the case, especially in short summaries in which the experience is presented shorn of relevant context.

Inaccurate reportage

The problem with historic cases such as this is that readers are most likely to

know about the case through its inclusion in books by authors already committed to choosing and presenting such cases in support of a particular interpretation, in this case the real existence of crisis apparitions that, in some cases, may well be true. Over the years, this interpretation with regard to a particular case, as here, is taken for granted and tends to be recounted by later commentators in ever shortening summaries and consequent loss of context, on the basis that this is all the reader needs to know. Colin Wilson, for example, in his chapter headed *The World of Spirits* (Wilson, 1988, p.359) sums up this case up as follows:

> 'And in another well-known case from the records of the SPR, Lieutenant J.J. Larkin was writing letters when the door opened and his friend Lieutenant David McConnel shouted "Hello boy!" Larkin heard a few hours later that McConnel had crashed at roughly the time he had seen him. His ghost seems to have had no problems opening a door and holding a brief conversation'.

Not only was Larkin not writing letters when M'Connel opened the door and shouted 'Hello, boy' (there is no record of him shouting) but the whole experience is now being presented to the reader in a circumstantial vacuum. With no other information to hand the reader is likely to conclude that M'Connel had obviously survived death and was able to appear to Larkin in the form of a very lifelike ghost on the assumption that Wilson would not have included this case otherwise. The implication is that everyone will survive bodily death and remain self-aware.

An even worse, and frankly unforgivable example concerning this case is given in Michael Schmicker's book titled, ironically, as *Best Evidence* (2nd ed. 2002) under a subsection headed 'Best scientific evidence'. His brief account includes two completely misleading errors. Of the case he says 'Among the best-known and documented "crisis apparitions" is the case of British Lieut. David McConnel, a pilot trainee who took off on a flight to another airbase and died in a plane crash on Dec.7, 1918. The exact moment of his death, 3.25 PM. was known because the watch on his wrist had stopped when he hit the ground. About the same time that he crashed his roommate, Lt. J. J. Larkin, saw him walk into the pilot lounge. Larkin asked if he had a good flight and McConnell answered "Yes. Got there all right. Had a good trip." Then he left.' Later Schmicker says it remains one of the best cases in

the SPR files because ‘It had a reliable, no-nonsense witness whose claim was confirmed by another independent witness and the details themselves were written down in detail shortly afterwards.’ (p.223/4).

Here we have an incorrect first name, he was ‘James’ not ‘David’, and he was not a pilot trainee. The first misleading error is to tell the reader that M’Connel’s apparition actually walked into the public space of the pilot’s lounge, that Larkin saw him walk in, and after their brief exchange presumably saw him leave. The second misleading error is where he says that Lt Larkin’s claim to have seen M’Connel was ‘confirmed by another independent witness’. This implies that this witness also saw M’Connel’s apparition in the pilot’s lounge, whereas what the independent witness actually confirmed was that Larkin’s written account corresponded to what he had been told by Larkin on that previous afternoon.

If this is the only information that the reader has concerning this case, then they will inevitably believe that this is what happened as, after all, Schmicker’s book is called *Best Evidence,* and this case is actually presented under a subsection headed ‘Best scientific evidence’.

Conclusion

There is no final, definitive, answer to this case as we have no direct access to Lieut. Larkin’s experience of seeing M’Connel’s apparition at the moment that he experienced it. We know only what he reported and we have no reason to doubt the honesty of his account. How the question is answered will depend upon how Lieut. Larkin’s experience is interpreted in the context of what is known about the circumstances in which it occurred. In this case one interpretation is Larkin seeing and talking to a materialised, self-existent, crisis apparitional appearance of Lieut. M’Connel in his room. This raises acute problems with regard to the apparent physicality of his appearance, his physical actions and their brief conversation in which he says that he ‘got there alright’. The alternative interpretation is that Larkin, while lightly dozing in a stuffy room in front of the warm, open stove, had a brief hallucinatory dream of what he was expecting to experience at any moment, that merged seamlessly into his before, and after, state of consciousness. As far as he was concerned he was convinced that he had been awake throughout

because the sheer naturalness of the dreamed encounter, including the conversation in which M'Connel said he had had a successful trip, gave him no reason to think otherwise. The coincidence of timing consisted of the usual time for mid afternoon tea, M'Connel's expected return, and the moment of M'Connel's untimely death.

If parsimony of explanation is to be our guide, known in philosophy as Occam's Razor, then Larkin's state of expectancy and drowsy physical circumstances in which Larkin experienced seeing an apparition of M'Connel would seem to have played a determining role in the event. For an apparitional appearance composed entirely of anticipatory dream imagery there are no unresolved problems concerning M'Connel's apparent physical actions and the brief conversation in which M'Connel tells Larkin, as Larkin would have expected, that he had 'got there alright and had a good (or fine) trip'. As this alternative explanation is as likely, or more likely, than the crisis apparition explanation, this case should not be included in collections of cases demonstrating the existence of crisis apparitions.

Sources: This account is based upon the primary sources as recounted by Eleanor Sidgwick (1923, pp 152-160). Commentaries and opinions on the case by C.D. Broad (1962, pp 132-135) Arthur Berger (1988, pp18/19) Brian Inglis (1984, pp 74-75), Donald West (1954, pp 25-29), and other authors have been taken into account together with some additional detail concerning the operational context of those involved.

Originally published: *PR* 76:24-27. April, 2016, as 'Hello Boy' 'Hello, back already?' Did Pilot Lieutenant David E M'Connel appear to Pilot Lieutenant James J Larkin at the moment of his own untimely death on the 7th December 1918?

References

Berger, A, S. (1988) *Evidence of Life After Death: A Case-Book for the Tough Minded.* Florida. Survival Research Foundation.

Broad, C, D. (1962) *Lectures on Psychical Research.* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Inglis, B. (1984) *Science and Parascience: A History of the Paranormal 1914-1939*. London. Hodder & Stoughton.

MacKenzie, A. (1982) *Hauntings and Apparitions: An Investigation of the Evidence.* St Albans, Granada Publ.

Salter, W.H. (1938) *Ghosts and Apparitions.* London, Bell & Sons.

Schmicker, M. (2002) *Best Evidence: An Investigative Reporter's Three Year Quest.* (2nd ed). San Jose, Writer's Club.

Sidgwick, E.M. (1923) Phantasms of the Living. *Proc. SPR.* Vol 33, pp 23-429.

West, D. J. (1954) *Psychical Research Today*. London, Duckworth.

Wilson, I. (1995) *In Search of Ghosts.* London, Headline.

Wilson, C. (1985) *Afterlife: an Investigation of the Evidence for Life After Death.* London, Harrap.

Wilson, C (1988) *Beyond the Occult: Twenty Year's Research into the Paranormal.* London, Watkin's Publications.

CHAPTER FOUR

Samuel Clemens' dream foresees the metal funeral coffin and body of his younger brother Henry

Our daily lives and future planning depend upon the principle that cause always precedes effect. Because the world and society consist of a vast multiplicity of interacting causes and effects, daily life is only partly predictable, as the great majority of these interactions and their possible effect upon our own plans remain unknown to us. A familiar trip to the shops may result in tripping over a step or slipping on some ice that requires a visit to the local A&E department. What will happen to each of us by this time next week remains unknowable in principle so unknowable in practice. Whatever particular experience happens to us at 3.00 pm next Wednesday when that date becomes the present day cannot somehow exist 'out there' somewhere, while awaiting its set of causes to catch up with it, because it doesn't exist until the moment of happening.

The problem for this very sensible point of view that seems in accord with everyday experience, and is in agreement with mainstream scientific theory and practice, is that there are thousands of carefully checked and validated experiences where a person apparently 'sees', in dream or during everyday life, a completely unexpected mental picture of a future event that corresponds in all its major detail to what actually occurs. Sometimes it is an apparent prevision of a horrifyingly dramatic scene as it will appear later to an observer from that position, sometimes it is quite a trivial experience marked by the fact that you remember 'seeing' it before (see Chapter 19 for examples and extended discussion)

The term 'precognition' is given to this apparent preview of what will happen that is confirmed when details of the later event and the preview are compared in retrospect. To be classified as a precognition the precognised events must match very closely the actual events as they occur, rather like a tick list. Not 'an aeroplane crash', but specific details that apply to that predicted crash and that crash only. The evidence is strengthened if there is reliable evidence that others knew of the details contained in the precognition and could compare its accuracy with details of the apparently precognised

event (see Osborne, 1961, Mackenzie 1974, Rhine 1961, 1981, Hearne, 1989, Dossey,2009, Rhine-Feather & Schmicker 2005, Wargo, 2018, Taylor, 2020).

The following account of such a claim of dream precognition and the circumstances of its fulfilment is based upon the autobiographies of author Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens' pen name) as compiled by Albert Paine (1912, pp. 134-137) and Henry Smith (2010 pp. 274-277), and the biography of Mark Twain written by Ron Powers (2005, pp. 82-91). They, in line with all subsequent commentators, agree upon the details of the dream, the sequence of tragic events that led up to it, and the apparent site of dream detail fulfilment. The latter, however, will be questioned here as to its correctness, and an alternative location proposed that offers confirmatory support for the claim that this was a genuine case of precognition. It should be remembered that in America the 'first floor' is the same as our UK 'ground floor', so a 'second-floor sitting room' is the same as our first floor sitting room.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910)

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was author Mark Twain's real name, and when he was four years old his family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, a port town on the Mississippi some 130 miles north of St Louis. His father, a judge and senator, died from pneumonia when Samuel was aged eleven and the next year Samuel became an apprentice printer, working as a typesetter and contributing light hearted articles to the *Hannibal Journal* owned by his older brother Orion. In 1853, aged 18, he went to New York to work as a printer, but in 1855 returned to live near the Mississippi again. During a 1000 mile (1609 km) voyage down the river from St. Louis to New Orleans in 1856 he was so taken by the steamboat pilot Horace Bixby's account of life as a river boat pilot that he changed career to sign up as an apprentice cub pilot with Bixby. He obtained his river pilot's licence three years later in 1859 after studying over 2,000 miles of the Mississippi and learning the locations of hundreds of ports and small landing stages. With ultimate responsibility for safely navigating a several hundred ton side-wheeler steam boat with full cargo plus hundreds of passengers through the ever changing shoal waters and sand banks of the vast and crowded river, a qualified river pilot was well

paid, and his occupation was held in high social esteem.

In January 1858 Samuel was transferred ‘on loan’ from Horace Bixby to John, S. Klinefelter, captain of the sidepaddle steamboat *SS Pennsylvania*, to work under his pilot William Brown while Bixby was engaged as a pilot on the Missouri river. The *SS Pennsylvania* could carry some 480 tons of cargo and around 400 passengers. In February 1858 Samuel persuaded Klinefelter to take on his younger brother Henry, then aged nineteen and leading a rather aimless life in St Louis, as a ‘mud clerk’ in the hope that he could work his way up. A mud clerk’s job was to jump off the boat at various unscheduled muddy stops where there was no built up landing stage, to unload and load goods, and help passengers on and off. In return a mud-clerk received free meals and berthing with chance of promotion. The two brothers were together for the next six trips.

Some three months after Henry had joined the *Pennsylvania* they were staying with their sister Pamela, her husband William Moffat and Annie, their six year old niece, in the Moffats’ house in St Louis. This was a regular routine during the three days of unloading and taking on of new cargo and passengers. Henry had to return to the ship each night for guard duties. Towards morning on the night of the 30th May Samuel, now aged twenty one, had a vivid dream in which ‘*I had seen Henry as a corpse. He lay in a metallic burial case. He was dressed in a suit of my clothing and on his breast lay a great bouquet of white flowers with a red rose at the centre. The casket stood on a couple of chairs’* (Powers. p.84. original italics).

So great was the hallucinatory power of the dream that under its influence Samuel arose early, convinced that Henry’s corpse lay in the nearby sitting room. Feeling unable to open the door to look, he left the house to walk around the block. While walking the vivid dream dispersed, and realising that it was just a very bad dream ‘he ran back, charged up the stair-case to the second-floor sitting room “*and was made glad again, for there was no casket there*’” **(**Powers, p.85 original italics). That morning, over breakfast, he told his sister-in-law Pamela and young Annie of his vivid dream. When recounting the incident in later life Annie said that when the family heard about it they were not impressed. ‘Indeed’, she said, **‘**they were amused that he took it so seriously’.

Later that same day the *Pennsylvania* cast off from St Louis, heading down to New Orleans some 1,280 river miles away, and the dream was soon

forgotten under pressure of work. Unfortunately, the personal relationship between pilot William Brown and Samuel as cub pilot had become very antagonistic, as Brown bitterly resented Samuel's relatively wealthy background and said so at every opportunity. On the 3rd June, with Brown at the wheel and Samuel alongside him in the pilothouse, Henry shouted an order to them from Captain Klinefelter to make an unscheduled stop at a plantation. The steamboat failed to stop and Klinefelter rushed to tell Brown to turn about and go back. Brown denied hearing Henry's message, but Samuel contradicted Brown, saying that he did hear Henry's shout. Brown, incensed, left the wheel to attack Henry, and Samuel attacked him in turn. With the steamboat now dangerously out of control, Brown managed to break free from Samuel and regain control of the wheel.

After hearing their conflicting accounts, Klinefelter backed Samuel's account and when the *Pennsylvania* docked in New Orleans on the 5th June he tried to replace Brown for the return voyage upriver to St Louis, but was blocked by the powerful pilots' union. Realising that the relationship between Brown and Samuel had broken down beyond repair, Klinefelter secured passage for Samuel to return upriver on the *SS A.T. Lacey*, another steamboat. The *Pennsylvania* with Henry, a full cargo and some four hundred passengers on board was scheduled to depart on the 9th June and the *A.T. Lacey* three days later on the 11th June, so on the 8th June the two brothers spent their last evening together on the lamplit New Orleans waterfront.

The tragedy

At 6 am on Sunday, 13th June, five days after their meeting and some sixty miles below Memphis near Ship Island, the *Pennsylvania's* high pressure boilers blew up in a huge explosion of superheated steam. The front half of the *Pennsylvania*, including the pilot house, adjacent cabins, decks and chimney stacks erupted high into the air and fell in a twisted mass of hot steel and fragments of wood. Hundreds of passengers were blown into the river and dozens of survivors screamed in agony from their burns. Henry Clemens, who was sleeping in his cabin directly above the boilers, was blown through the ceiling on a blast of steam. He fell back onto the wrecked boilers and managed to somehow drag himself into the river, where he was pulled into a crowded rescue boat. After many hours exposed to the intense summer heat, and following two boat transfers, Henry, with many other dreadfully scalded

passengers, arrived the next day at a makeshift hospital set up in the Memphis Exchange.

Two days' sailing behind the *Pennsylvania,* Samuel and crew suddenly heard a shout from the shore that she had blown up with over 150 lives lost (eventually some 300). The *A.T. Lacey* was soon steaming through a mass of corpses, body parts, luggage and debris floating downstream before the appalled crew eventually docked at Memphis. Samuel arrived at the Memphis Exchange on Tuesday and was horrified to see the badly scalded figure of his brother, now smothered in white medical paste and swathed in white cotton bandage, with only his face untouched. Like Samuel, Henry was a handsome young man and doctors and nurses alike were struck by the contrast between his unmarked face and his badly scalded body. With Samuel at his side during the day, Henry drifted in and out of consciousness and died during the night of the 21st June. In the morning his body, like others, was dressed, placed in a coffin, and transferred to the temporary 'dead room' to await collection by relatives. When Samuel entered the 'dead room' later that day he saw many bodies lying in plain white pine coffins but found Henry, now dressed in one of Samuel's suits that he had borrowed some time earlier, lying in a metal coffin. The local women volunteers had been so touched by Henry's quiet stoicism that they had clubbed together to raise 60 dollars to buy a metal coffin. Powers quotes Samuel as saying:

> 'I recognised instantly that my dream of several weeks before was here exactly reproduced so far as these details went – and I think I missed one detail, but that was immediately supplied, for just then an elderly lady entered the place with a large bouquet consisting mainly of white roses, and in the center of it was a red rose, and she laid it on his breast' (p. 90).

In a state of grief and shocked recognition Samuel realised that the scene in the dead room now seemed to mirror his dream. When he returned that evening to the Gentlemen's Club in Memphis where he was staying, he told them the story of his vivid dream some three weeks earlier and its apparent dreadful fulfilment in what was known as the 'dead room'.

All commentators have inferred from Clemens' comment 'I think I missed one detail….' that three of the precognitive dream details were already present, namely the *metal coffin* standing on *two chairs* with the body of Henry dressed in one of *Samuel's suits.* The fourth and apparently final missing detail was completed by the placing of the *bouquet of white roses*

with a central red rose on Henry's chest. In his 2012 book on precognition *The Labyrinth of Time*, Anthony Peake expresses this inference very clearly when he re-imagines the scene by saying, 'with one notable exception, all the coffins were of simple unpainted pine. In the centre of the room was a metal casket balanced across two chairs. With mounting horror Samuel realised he was living his dream in absolute detail. However, one item was missing: the roses. As Samuel stood taking in the scene one of the volunteer nurses walked into the room carrying a bouquet of roses. Set in the middle of a bunch of white roses was the single red rose that Samuel had seen in his dream' (pp. 268-9).

The problem

There is an unrecognised problem with the assumption that the 'dead room' was the scene of precognitive dream fulfilment. According to Smith's account, Samuel telegraphed William Moffat to say that Henry was dead, and he would be boarding a steamship to St Louis next day with the coffin. He was then joined by his brother Orion, and next morning they commenced their 415 mile journey upstream, docking in St Louis at 8am some three days later. On disembarking Samuel runs to William Moffat's merchant business to say that they have arrived, but misses him as Mr Moffat had already gone to meet the docked steamboat with instructions for the porters to take the coffin to his house. Samuel, on hearing this, then hurries to the house, arriving just as they are unloading the coffin from the cart, preparatory to taking it upstairs to be placed on two chairs prepared for it on the landing. Samuel stops them to check how Henry is looking, and seeing that Henry's face is now distorted to one side he asks them to leave it as he doesn't want his mother to see Henry until this has been rectified. On going up the stairs, Smith quotes him as saying:

'When I went upstairs, there stood the two chairs – placed to receive the coffin – just as I had seen in my dream; if I had arrived two or three minutes later, the casket would have been resting on them, precisely as in my dream several weeks earlier' (Smith, p.277).

At this moment Samuel is now imagining how the coffin *would have looked* if it had been placed upon those two chairs and sees that imagined scene as completing the detail of his dream. From this comment it would seem that the metal coffin was not resting upon two chairs in the 'dead

room', which might have created resentment by its implied favouritism, but was on the floor alongside the pine coffins. However, even with this imaginary scene one precognitive detail remains to be completed.

The clue regarding dream completion lies in Andrew Mackenzie's discussion of the case in his 1974 book *The Riddle of the Future* where, on p.158, he quotes in full Paine's description of the original dream as follows: 'He saw Henry as a corpse, lying in a metal burial case in the sitting-room, supported on two chairs. On his breast lay a bouquet of flowers, white, with a single crimson bloom in the centre.' Note that *in the sitting room* now makes sense of him assuming, while still in a half waking hallucinatory state of dreaming that morning, that the coffin was in the nearby sitting room and why, once fully awake after his walk, he dashed back upstairs to check and was so relieved to see that it was not there. It should be noted here that Paine knew Samuel very well and was his official biographer, so it seems likely that his fuller description of the dream is the most accurate account.

Final dream fulfilment

The coffin was eventually taken into Mr Moffat's house by his servants and carried into the second floor sitting room, to be placed on those same two chairs prepared for it. All the dream details were now in place *including the sitting room* of the dream. If Samuel had arrived straight from the ship to the house, without seeing Henry in his coffin in the 'dead room', his dream would have been fulfilled exactly: the coffin on the two chairs in the sitting room, with Henry dressed in one of Samuel's suits, and the bouquet of white roses with a central red rose on his chest. All this would have mirrored his dream in totality. However, by the time he does see the body in the living room he feels that his dream had already been, in effect, fulfilled. But by now it has become a distressing familiar sight, so the significance of the sitting room as completing the original location of the dream appears to have gone unrecognised. Next day the family boarded the steamboat *Hannibal City* for the 130 mile journey upstream to Hannibal, where Henry was laid to rest in the graveyard next to his father.

Discussion

For any account to be classified as an example of precognition, the devil lies in the detail. In those early steamboat days, boiler explosions were fairly common as pressure gauges were often faulty, unseen fatigue cracks developed in poorly constructed boilers, and with superheated steam pressures of hundreds of pounds per square inch, they could suddenly explode and literally blow a steamboat apart. If Samuel's dream had been of the scene of Henry being killed in a boiler room explosion then it could have been attributed to a fear of such accidents, and not precognitive unless accompanied by detail specific to that accident as confirmed by observers. But this dream gave no information about the cause of Henry's injuries, the location and the circumstances of his death, the 'dead room' with the other pine wood coffins, or the woman laying the bouquet on his chest. It was very specific concerning a set of five discrete details now completely fulfilled:

- A metal coffin.
- The coffin mounted upon two chairs.
- The body of Henry lying in the coffin wearing one of Samuel's suits.
- A large bouquet of white roses surrounding a central red or crimson rose on Henry's breast.
- The second floor sitting room in the Moffats' house in St Louis.

The odds against chance that all five independently observed and collectively related details would match the same set of details in Samuel's dream some three weeks earlier are probably impossible to estimate. If the possibility of precognition is considered impossible in principle, then pure chance, however statistically astronomical as in this case, is the only possible explanation in every case. If precognition is considered as a possibility, then whether a given case can best be interpreted as chance coincidence or precognition depends upon the relative balance of probabilities. In Samuel's case the balance of probabilities in terms of five, confirmed, specific details that matched the specific details of his dream strongly favours the reality of precognition. His precognitive dream of Henry in his coffin and the tragic circumstances of his death haunted Mark Twain for the rest of his life, and he became a member of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) soon after its

founding in 1882.

Originally published: *JSPR*, Vol 81:17-25 January, 2017 as ‘Re-evaluation of the Samuel Clemens Dream Recognition Case – Did He Foresee the Funeral Casket of his Younger Brother Henry?

References

Dossey, L. (2009) *The Power of Premonitions: How Knowing the Future can shape our Lives.* New York. Dutton.

Hearne, K (1989) *Visions of the Future: The Definitive Study of Premonitions.* Wellingborough, UK.

Mackenzie, A. (1974) *Riddle of the Future: A modern study of precognition.* London, Andrew Barker Ltd.

Osborne, A.W. (1961) *The Future is Now: The Significance of Precognition.* New York. University Books.

Paine, A. B. (1912) *Mark Twain: A Biography.* New York, Harper & Brothers.

Peake, A. (2012) *The Labyrinth of Time; The illusion of past, present and future.* London,

Arctarus Publishing.

Powers, R. (2005) *Mark Twain: A Life.* New York, Free Press N.C. McFarland & Co.

Rhine, L.E. (1961) *Hidden Channels of the Mind.* London, Victor Gollanz Ltd.

Rhine, L. E. (1982) *The Invisible Picture: A study of psychic experiences.* Jefferson, Rhine, L. E., Feather, S., Schmicker, M.S. (2005) *The Gift: Extraordinary paranormal experiences of ordinary people.* London, Rider.

Smith, H. E. (ed) (2010) *Autobiography of Mark Twain.* Volume 1. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Taylor, J. (2020) *Contact with the Future: The Nature of Extrasensory Perception,* Amazon.

Vargo, E (2018) *Time Loops: Precognition, Retrocausation, and the Unconscious.* San Antonio. Anomalist Books.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mrs Wilmot crosses the stormy Atlantic during an Out-of-Body Experience to visit her husband in his cabin

When someone undergoes an Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) they feel that they have left their body and are 'out there' in space, either above the scene looking down at their body or travelling elsewhere, an experience known as OBE travel or projection. After much practice some people can voluntarily induce such an experience, as explained by Luis Minero in his book *Demystifying the Out-of-Body Experience* (2017), but for most people it occurs spontaneously, often when involved in a traumatic event such as a road traffic accident, when it is as if they are watching from a point over the scene. An OBE can also occur when in a state of intense fear or pain, or when experiencing the effects of psychedelic drugs or undergoing a Near-Death-Experience (NDE). The psychologist Celia Green published one of the first systematic treatments of the subject in her book *Out-Of-The-Body Experiences* (1968), which contained accounts of different forms of OBE experiences.

Mainstream neuroscience and mainstream psychology consider OBEs as hallucinatory experiences in which the brain constructs a vivid imagery of what a person would see if they were in that position in space or moving through it. Professor Olaf Blanke, a neuroscientist, found that electrical stimulation of a cortical area of the brain, known as the right temporo-parietal junction (TPJ), just behind the right ear, caused very convincing OBE-like sensations. During periods of electrical stimulation patients felt as if their body was sitting upright or even rising into the air when it was still lying flat on the operating table. The area of cerebral cortex that forms the TPJ is connected to all the sensory receiving areas of the brain, and its function is to integrate this incoming information into a very accurate conscious sense of where our body is in space, known as our body image, and what it is doing at all times.

An alternative view to mainstream opinion is that the centre of one's conscious and observing self during an OBE really is where you are, separated in space from the physical brain to which you eventually return and

download your experience as a memory for later recall. According to this view, as independent minds we can leave our brain to travel elsewhere and return to it. Proponents of this interpretation of OBEs quote cases where, during an OBE, the person observes events they could not possibly have seen from where they were lying on their back, often in a state of unconsciousness with eyes closed, and sometimes taped shut. The cardiologist Pim van Lommel in his book *Consciousness Beyond Life* (2007, pp 20-21) quotes an example where a patient is brought into the accident and emergency department in a state of profound unconsciousness following prolonged cardiac arrest. He is successfully resuscitated but remains in a coma for another week before regaining consciousness. On seeing a particular male charge nurse and hearing his distinctive voice, the patient tells him that he was watching what they were doing from above and seeing him take his false teeth out of his mouth and put them into the sliding drawer of a nearby trolley cart. When his story was checked, the teeth were still there (pp 20-21). Sceptics have questioned this account, as the male nurse did not publish his version until several years later, but Dr Pim van Lommel says that there is enough corroborative evidence to accept it as a true account.

The Wilmot Case

Those who argue that during an OBE the experient's centre of consciousness literally leaves their brain and travels to other physical locations, have cited the Wilmot case as an exemplar that demonstrates the validity of such a claim. Details of the case were first published in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (1891) by Eleanor Sidgwick, then Editor of the SPR's *Journal* and *Proceedings.* Given that the debate continues as to the correct interpretation of OBEs, it might be useful to revisit the Wilmot case and re-evaluate whether the evidence it provides supports the OBE interpretation, or whether a non OBE explanation is more likely. The conclusions reached by other commentators will also be considered.

As in all such investigations we need to adopt a neutral stance and take a fresh look at what is known, reflecting upon those involved, the circumstances in which the OBE is said to have occurred, and the possible influence of subsequent events. As the case, which was carefully researched by Dr Richard Hodgson in 1889-90 on behalf of the Society for Psychical

Research, stretches over some 22 years, from when it is said to have occurred in October 1863 to the first written and signed account in 1885, we will need to place it within the wider context of late nineteenth century society's keen interest in spiritualism and psychical research.

The circumstances

Mr S. R. Wilmot was an American business man who ran a manufacturing firm in Bridgeport, Connecticut, a very busy shipbuilding port some 70 miles north of New York. Following a business trip to England he was returning to New York accompanied by William J. Tait, an Englishman aged about 50 who was returning to his family in Cleveland, Ohio, and his position as city librarian. The son of a clergyman, Tait was described by Mr Wilmot as 'a sedate and very religious man'. Mr Tait had been Mr Wilmot's travelling companion on his outward voyage to England from New York in July, 1863, aboard the brand new Cunard steamship *Olympus*. Waiting for Mr Wilmot's return was Mrs Wilmot, mother of their three children who was staying with her parents in nearby Watertown, Connecticut. Travelling back with Mr Wilmot and Mr Tait was Mr Wilmot's sister, Miss Eliza E. Wilmot. The three were booked on board the *City of Limerick*, an Inman Line steamship of some 1500 tons. She was one of the first generation of steamships driven by screw propeller instead of midship side paddles, known as paddlers or sidewheelers. At this period of development steamships still carried sail to assist the engines, both for fuel economy and as insurance against engine breakdown. Like her sister ship the *City of Boston*, the *City of Limerick* carried three masts for sails and one funnel.

Launched in 1855, she had been bought by the flourishing Inman Line in early 1863 for transport of the rapidly growing numbers of emigrants from Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia seeking a new life in America. Scheduled for the regular Liverpool to New York return passage, she had completed her maiden crossing in May, 1863. Passengers were divided into around 300-400 persons travelling in 3rd class lower deck steerage, plus a relatively small number of financially better off passengers, mainly business and professional, booked into upper deck 2nd class cabins or the slightly larger 1st class state-rooms. As in the outward voyage, Mr Wilmot had booked to share a two

berth state-room with Mr Tait, the latter occupying the upper berth that was recessed relative to the lower berth, following the outward rising curve of the stern. This was a feature common to all steamships at the time. Miss Eliza Wilmot was booked into another state-room.

In these early screw propeller steamships, the small state-rooms hardly merited the comfort implied by the term as, like the cabins, they were just for sleeping in. The deck layout of cabin accommodation still followed that of the older paddle steamers, where the midship section contained the engine and transmission to the paddle shafts, and so was the noisiest part of the ship, with the state-rooms located at the stern as this was quietest. But with this cabin layout unchanged and the engine and screw propeller shaft now at the stern, the state-room occupants had to balance more spacious accommodation against the increased noise and vibration of the engine, propeller shaft and screw, the continuous loud creaking of the steering, and the maximum roll, pitch and yaw of the ship's stern in rough weather, compared to the more balanced and therefore less violent motion amidship. It was not until the early 1870s that vociferous passenger complaints eventually led to the repositioning of state-rooms amidship for minimum discomfort. The main compensation for 1st class state-room passengers who were not seasick was that they could enjoy excellent food, wine and service in the select midships saloon.

The *City of Limerick* sailed from Liverpool on 3 October 1863, picking up more passengers from Queenstown (now Cobh), Ireland, on 4 October, and leaving for New York on 5 October. They soon encountered a very violent storm that battered the ship for over ten days. It was so severe that it caused considerable damage on deck, tearing away the closely reefed storm sails after breaking their restraining booms. During this prolonged storm Mr Wilmot endured violent bouts of acute sea sickness and remained confined to his berth, sleeping fitfully and feeling very ill. Whether Mr Tait and Miss Wilmot were similarly afflicted is unknown, but some degree of sea sickness seems very likely.

Mr Wilmot's vivid dream.

According to an account written some twenty two years later, at some time towards the early morning of Wednesday, 13 October, Mr Wilmot had a vivid dream that he recounts as follows:

> Towards morning I dreamed that I saw my wife, whom I had left in the United States, come to the door of my state-room, clad in her nightdress. At the door she seemed to discover that I was not the only occupant of the room, hesitated a little, then advanced to my side, stooped to kiss me and, after gently caressing me, quietly withdrew…. Upon waking I was surprised to see my fellow passenger, whose berth was above mine but not directly over it — owing to the fact that our room was at the stern of the vessel — leaning upon his elbow and looking fixedly at me. 'You're a pretty fellow', he said at length, 'to have a lady come and visit you this way!' I pressed him for an explanation which, at first, he declined to give. At length he related what he had seen while lying wide awake in his berth. It exactly corresponded to my dream. The incident seemed so strange to me that I questioned him about it on three separate occasions, the last one shortly before reaching port. Mr Tait repeated to me the same account of what he had witnessed. On reaching port we parted and I never saw him again afterwards.

We then have testimony from Miss Wilmot, concerning her conversation during breakfast with Mr Tait, on the morning of Mr Wilmot's dream, as written in a letter of 1890 to Richard Hodgson, Council member of the SPR. In response to Mr Hodgson's inquiry as to her memory of the event Miss Wilmot said:

> 'In regard to my brother's strange experience on our homeward voyage in the Limerick — I remember Mr Tait asking me one morning (when assisting me to the breakfast table for the cyclone was still raging fearfully) if I had been in last night to see my brother; and my astonishment at the question as he shared the same state-room. At my 'No, Why?' he said that he saw some woman in white, who went up to my brother (who was too seasick to leave his berth for several days). I soon went to see my brother who told me that Mr Tait had wondered at my coming to see him, and I think he said he had dreamed of seeing his wife there, but in the imminent danger that still loomed over us, I did not fix my mind on their later conversations.'

Subsequent events and Mrs Wilmot's vivid dream

The ship docked safely in New York on Thursday 22 October, 1863, and next day Mr Wilmot took the train to Watertown to be reunited with his wife and family. His 1889 account (written some 27 years later) of their conversation as soon as he and his wife were alone, is as follows:

> 'Almost her first question when we were alone together was, 'Did you receive a visit from me a week ago last Tuesday?' 'A visit from you?' said I, 'We were more than a thousand miles at sea'. 'I know it', she replied, 'but it seemed to me that I visited you'. 'It would be impossible', said I. 'Tell me what makes you think so?' My wife then told me that on account of the severity of the weather and the reported loss of the steamship Africa that had gone ashore at Cape Race, she was extremely anxious about me, and about four o'clock in the morning it seemed to her that she went out to seek me. Crossing the wide and stormy sea she came at length to a low, black steamship, whose side she went up, and descending into the cabin, passed through it until she came to my state-room. "Tell me" she said, "do they ever have state-rooms like the one I saw, where the upper berth extends further back than the under one? A man was in the upper berth, looking right at me, and for a moment I was afraid to go in, but I soon went up to the side of your berth, bent down and kissed you, embraced you and then went away". The description given by my wife of the steamship was correct in all particulars, though she had never seen it.'"

'Last Tuesday' would have been 12 October, the same day that the Royal Mail Ship, RMS Africa, was badly holed off Cape Race. As the ship left Cobh on 5 October and arrived in New York on 22 October, it was a 17 day journey, and assuming they entered the storm within two days, Mrs Wilmot's dream occurred about midway through the height of the storm, when Mr Wilmot would have been feeling violently ill and probably had no idea of the date.

In her 1889 response to an inquiry from Mr Hodgson concerning her memory of the event, Mrs Wilmot wrote, 'In reply to the question of "did I notice any details about the man I saw in the upper berth?" I cannot at this late day positively say that I did, but I distinctly remember that I felt much

disturbed by his presence, as he leaned over, looking at us. I think that I told my mother next morning about my dream; and I know that I had a very vivid sense all day of having visited my husband; the impression was so strong that I felt unusually happy and refreshed, to my surprise"'. In an 1890 reply to Mr Hodgson, Mr Wilmot writes, 'as to whether I and my wife have ever had any analogous experiences, I will say for myself, Yes, dreams revealing future events, but nothing of such a joint nature'.

When were the details of this event recorded?

While this intriguing story must have entered into immediate family history, and been recounted and discussed with friends and relatives on many occasions over the years, it seems that no written record was made at the time - beyond, as seems likely, letters to friends and relatives. It was not until 1885, some 22 years later, that a certain Mr W. B. H. of Bridgeport, who did not wish to be identified 'as I have simply acted as scribe', decided to write an account from memory of what Mr Wilmot had told him, saying in his eventual cover letter to Richard Hodgson some four years later in December, 1889, that 'the incidents were related to me by Mr S. R. Wilmot, a manufacturer of this city, several years ago, and I wrote them down from memory, and he afterwards revised the manuscript'. Mr Wilmot had, in fact, made marginal notes in pencil, acknowledging that with these notes it was now correct according to memory, and signed it as such. In a postscript he had offered to rewrite the account and sign it in ink, adding that 'my wife will sign hers as to the correctness of her dream', but unfortunately this offer was never taken up.

Besides being a Council Member of the SPR, Richard Hodgson had been appointed as Secretary of the newly formed American SPR and at this time lived in Boston, Massachusetts, some 150 miles north of Bridgeport. Qualified in law, he was an experienced researcher into alleged psychical phenomena who had exposed many mediums and psychics as frauds - including, he claimed, Madame Blavatsky, which had resulted in a storm of adverse publicity against the Theosophical movement that she had founded. On receipt of W. B. H.'s cover letter and signed account, Hodgson proceeded to verify details with the Wilmots, but was not able to obtain Mr Tait's

independent account of what he remembered seeing that night, because he had died some years previously. In her above-quoted letter to Hodgson, Miss Wilmot had added that she thought her brother must have written to Mr Tait after returning home, because when she visited the Taits some three years after the voyage 'he spoke of the wonderful coincidence'. Satisfied with his inquiries, Hodgson posted the correspondence to Eleanor Sidgwick, then secretary of the SPR. She, in turn, published a verbatim account from which these extracts have been taken (ibid. pp 41-47).

Some opinions on this case

Most commentators (with two exceptions) agree that the Wilmot case provides a very convincing example of the psi faculty in the form of an OBE, but others differ in their interpretation of what is said to have occurred.

Did Mrs Wilmot undergo an OBE projection?

Most modern authors who include this case in books and articles concerning ghosts, apparitions, OBEs and NDEs do so because, in their opinion, it presents a genuine, well attested, example of OBE projection to the observed destination. Frederic Myers (1843-1901), Classics professor and Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, one of the founders of the SPR in 1882, was an early advocate of this interpretation, quoting this case as good evidence of 'phantasmal travel' in his chapter on 'Sensory Automatism' (Myers, 1903, pp 160-61). Rayner C. Johnson, physicist and Master of Queen's College at Melbourne University, who was interested in psi phenomena, also accepted the OBE projection hypothesis, saying that, 'I cannot, however, find any good reason for not supposing that the vehicle of Mrs Wilmot's consciousness was itself made visible to the perception of Mr Tait' (Johnson, 1953, p. 237). In his chapter on OBE experiences which included projection beyond the immediate vicinity of the body, Robert Crookall, who practiced voluntary OBEs, also considered it a 'well attested' case (Crookall, 1973, p.71). Hilary Evans, an experienced and highly respected investigator of psychic phenomena, had no doubt that this was an example of OBE projection, concluding that 'for Mr Tait it was evidently a ghost experience, for Mr Wilmot a dream, while for his wife, though she thinks it is only a dream, it is evidently a case of spontaneous out-of-the-body (OBE) projection' (Evans, 2002, pp 226-227). In their summaries of the case, both

psychologist Chris Carter (2012, pp 110-111) and psychologists Edward and Emily Kelly et al (2007, p, 395) come to the same conclusion. This, they all agree, is a case of OBE projection beyond all reasonable doubt.

Or was it Reciprocal Telepathic Clairvoyance?

Mrs Sidgwick interpreted Mrs Wilmot's dream from a reciprocal clairvoyant viewpoint, as a telepathic viewing of the cabin through the mind of her husband during his dream, saying:

> 'Mrs Wilmot had — waking or sleeping — a vision of her husband in which she correctly perceived some part of his surroundings; Mr Wilmot dreamt his wife's thoughts; and Mr Tait had a waking hallucination which corresponded with the main features of Mr Wilmot's dream. It is difficult to say whether there was really any difference in kind between Mr and Mrs Wilmot's experiences. Each perceived the other in the situation in which the other supposed himself or herself to be. But in doing so, Mrs Wilmot was made aware supernormally of certain actual facts that would have been cognisable to her senses had she been in her husband's cabin in the body. She was, therefore, in some sense clairvoyant at that moment.' (ibid. p. 45).

Although this interpretation seemed to account for the Wilmot's apparently shared dream, Sidgwick felt that it did not really account for Mr Tait's observations and wondered whether 'Mrs Wilmot was actually there in some sense other than a purely mental one' (p. 46).

Or was it a case of Bilocation?

Psychologist Michael Murphy, co-founder of the Esalen Institute, California, wondered if it was more a case of bilocation, where a person is sometimes observed to be in two or more locations at the same time, rather than an OBE projection as such (Murphy, 1992, pp 112-113). The difference between bilocation and an OBE is that, as Murphy says, in bilocation the person is seen in two places at the same time but remains unaware of what others are seeing. The problem with this explanation is that she was seen by only one person – Mr Tait.

Or was it a mid-level Apparitional Drama?

The British mathematician and physicist George Tyrrell, one-time President of the SPR, was a noted researcher who employed statistical analysis to assess whether his subjects demonstrated any precognitive ability to detect which lamp in a row of lamps would randomly light up next. He used the term 'out-of-body-experience' in his 1943 book *Apparitions*, to explain accounts of the reported perception of apparitions that appeared to follow all the laws of perspective when perceived and then vanish. He proposed that they are not present in actual physical space but are the joint creation of the subconscious, or mid-level constituent of the mind of the agent, conveying 'telepathic idea patterns' to the mind of the percipient. His theory was that our sense of 'I-ness' or self is composed of several psychological levels, from the immediacy of conscious experiencing to various subconscious levels.

Using a theatre analogy Tyrrell proposed that there is a 'mid-level' of subconscious creative imaging that is worked upon by what he termed the 'Producer' and 'Stage manager'. Together they create hallucinatory imagery in line with the agent's telepathic information that is then projected onto the perceived surroundings with perceptual fidelity. In the Wilmot case Tyrrell proposed that the 'apparitional drama' was 'constructed by the mid-levels of both their personalities working in collaboration'. Mr Tait's waking presence in the cabin ensured that 'his mid-level factor was acted upon because the play would not have been complete without him'.

Or was it telepathic control of a sleepwalking mind?

Charles D. Broad (1887-1971), Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy, Cambridge, and one-time President of the SPR, accepted the existence of psi phenomena and explored the philosophical implications for any theory of mind. He was doubtful that this was an instance of OBE projection on the part of Mrs Wilmot, and in his book *Lectures on Psychical Research* (1962) put forward a theory that requires a more extended summary. He speculated that one explanation for Mr Tait's account is that, although Miss Wilmot did not remember doing so 'she did, in fact, walk, *in her sleep*, into the stateroom, and go to her brother's berth and touch him, and then go out again' (original italics). If so, he then wondered whether there was 'a kind of telepathic action between herself and her sister-in-law Mrs Wilmot, inducing the latter actually to do, *in her sleep,* what the former, in a state of great emotional tension, was then *dreaming of herself doing*' (original italics). In

turn, could Mrs Wilmot's apparent knowledge of the occupied, recessed, upper berth be explained by 'a kind of reciprocal telepathic action from Miss Wilmot's sleepwalking perception of the berth layout to Mrs Wilmot's dreaming mind?' Broad wondered whether it was a '*quasi* OBE' in the sense that Mrs Wilmot and Miss Wilmot were sharing the same telepathic dream at the same location during Miss Wilmot's episode of sleepwalking. The sensation of his sister's contact and kiss might, he feels, have triggered Mr Wilmot to telepathically enter into the same dream as seen from his viewpoint of his wife visiting him. As for Mr Tait, if Miss Wilmot had not sleepwalked, then maybe his experience was 'a waking *quasi*-perception of a *phantasm of the living*' (original italics). On reflection, this seems quite an astonishing feat of synchronised telepathy by all involved while asleep.

Rejection of an OBE or other paranormal based explanation

Those who reject the hypothesis of OBE projection on the basis that like all claimed paranormal phenomena it is impossible in principle, and therefore impossible in practice, tend not to comment upon individual cases as there seems no point in doing so. In their view, there already is, or eventually will be, an adequate non-psi explanation to account for the apparent anomaly, either now or in the future. This is the mainstream position of the neurosciences, neuropsychology and science overall. For example, Dr Paul Edwards, philosopher and first Editor of the eight-volume *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accepted this philosophical position and was a firm disbeliever in life after death, reincarnation and all things paranormal on the grounds of sheer impossibility. He quotes the Wilmot case in detail in his book *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination* (1996) and agrees that it does read very convincingly, but nevertheless accepts Dr Susan Blackmore's (1983) reasons for dismissal of the case as evidence of OBE projection, on the grounds that as a well-qualified and experienced investigator of alleged paranormal phenomena she had come to this conclusion after carefully studying the original documentation in full.

So why did Dr Blackmore, a British psychologist who obtained her PhD in parapsychology, come to this conclusion? After summarising the main features of this case, Blackmore says:

> 'This story sounds very convincing until you look a little further. It is now not possible to talk to the people concerned, of course, and I have

found that there are no passenger lists or plans of the ship in existence. However, just reading the reports raises a host of questions. The whole story depends on the coincidence of Mr Wilmot's and his companion's visions with the experience of Mrs Wilmot. However, we are told all three sides of the coincidence by none other than Mr Wilmot himself, and he had been suffering from days of seasickness and sleeplessness at the time. That reduces its value, but worse still is that Mrs Wilmot never reported having had an OBE at all. Mr. Wilmot reported that she was worried and seemed to go out to seek him. But in her own report she only alludes briefly to her "dream", and she gives no description of what she saw. She says she thinks she told her mother about it the next morning, but there is no report from her mother. By the time the case was written up in 1889, the roommate was dead and unable to give his account. It seems to me that this case does not bear close scrutiny. I am not trying to say that it is worthless — it is a very interesting story — just that it is not the kind of evidence that would convince a reasonable person of the existence of accurate out-of-body vision, or of the accurate detection of a person in the out-of-body state.'

Discussion

Blackmore's point is that Mrs Wilmot's own account contains very little detail and is described as more of a dream than anything else. She is not quite correct in saying that there are no passenger lists or plans of the ship in existence. In 1889 the mysterious Mr W. H. B. checked the *City of Limerick* disembarkation list for 22 October 1863, as published in the New York *Herald*, to ensure he had his facts correct before contacting Mr Wilmot. Details of the *City of Limerick* can be found online under the Inman Line, and as for deck plans, although Blackmore is correct in that there is not one extant for the *City of Limerick* itself, deck plans of Inman Line sister ships, all showing stern-end state-room layouts, can also be found online. As to the rest of her comments on the merits of the case, the reader can check her interpretation against the extracts of the original reports as contained in this review. Psychologist Chris Carter (2012) quotes with approval Edward Kelly et al's (2007) rejection of Blackmore's reasons for dismissing the case, and also rejects Edwards's acceptance of her dismissal, saying that 'the case is not perfect, but Blackmore's and Edwards' misrepresentation of the reported

facts and offhand dismissal of testimony that conflicts with their beliefs is indefensible at best.'

Given these widely differing, contradictory, and often confusing interpretations of the same story it might be helpful if we imagine what Mr Wilmot and Mr Tait were experiencing in the state-room that particular night as on many preceding nights. Beyond mentioning the storm and Mr Wilmot being violently seasick, subsequent commentators have mainly concentrated on interpreting Mr Wilmot and Mrs Wilmot's account of their experiences according to their own belief systems, rather than attempting to place what happened in the context of conditions aboard ship.

The storm-tossed stateroom

Mr Wilmot and Mr Tait were just two people amongst some 60-70 storm-tossed 2nd and 1st class passengers in small adjacent cabins and stern-end state-rooms whose doors lined long connecting passageways on either side of the ship. Their sleeping berths were wildly heaving, tipping and swaying as the crests and troughs of the violent storm waves alternately lifted and dropped the ship's bow and then the stern by maybe up to 20 plus ft (7 metres), and rolled it from side to side, as well as sideways swaying. As for lighting, what there was would have been limited to ceiling swinging oil lamps, as the first passenger liner to be fitted with electric lighting was the Cunard liner *Servia* in 1881. Unless their state-room was lit by a ceiling suspended storm lantern, which it probably was, it would have been pitch black at the time of Mr Wilmot's dream because, if the two dreams were synchronised in time, with Mrs Wilmot's dream occurring around 4:00 a.m. in Waterstown, it would have been about 5:00-6:00 am on board ship some one thousand miles away in the Atlantic to the east.

If the state-room was in total darkness, Mrs Wilmot's phantasmal white nightdress must have glowed bright enough for Mr Tait to see it if it was part of an OBE projection. Alternatively, if the stateroom was lit by a suspended storm lamp, as seems far more likely, then her phantasmal nightdress must have been opaque enough to reflect light for Mr Tait to see her during her brief visitation.

Are there possible non-psi explanations?

Without rejecting these rather complicated psi-based explanations as offering

possible answers, are there possible non-psi explanations that can fit as well as, or better, from what we know of the facts? Maybe there are, and we can take Mr Tait's observation of 'some woman in white' as our starting point. If the adjoining passageway was dimly lit by swaying oil lamps so that passengers could negotiate their uncertain way to the toilets during the night, maybe a rather unwell woman passenger in white night attire inadvertently mistook their state-room door for her door (perhaps she was next to them) on her unsteady return. She opened the door, made her way across to the lower berth, realised her embarrassing mistake on bending down and touching Mr Wilmot, and went back out again. Mr Tait, disturbed by the sound of her entry, was either awake, or woke up in time to see 'some woman in white' bending down by Mr Wilmot's berth. If she had just silently appeared and disappeared as phantasms are said to do without using doors he would, surely, have remembered this when he spoke to Mr Wilmot that morning. Whoever he saw come into the stateroom made enough disturbance to wake him, and after crouching down by the lower berth and realising her mistake, went back out again, closing the door on her way out. He then went back to sleep.

Remembering the incident in the morning, he chides Mr Wilmot for knowing a lady well enough for her to visit him during the night. In response, Mr Wilmot relates his vivid dream of his wife's visit which, he says, closely parallels what Mr Tait said that he saw.

Despite the apparent correlation of what he remembered seeing with Mr Wilmot's description of his dream, Mr Tait remained convinced that he had seen a real woman dressed in white, not a dream phantom. Because of this certainty he now wondered whether it was Miss Wilmot who had entered the state-room to check on her brother and, through bending down to touch him, had become the unwitting cause of Mr Wilmot's dream. During breakfast with Miss Wilmot that morning he described what he had seen and asked if she had visited her brother. On the basis of propriety, she indignantly denied that she had done, leaving them both to wonder who he had seen.

There is an important discrepancy between Mr Tait's very brief account as recounted by Miss Wilmot, and Mrs Wilmot's memory of her dream in which she saw that 'a man was in the upper berth, looking right at me'. The height of the upper berth would have been around 1.7m (5 ft 6 ins) and the vertical distance between the two berths about 2-3ft (0.6-1.0m) so in the light

of a swinging oil lamp it is doubtful that they would have been face to face. If they were, and it had been Miss Wilmot he would recognised her, but this would only have been possible if she was some 6ft (0.6-1.0m) tall, and the same goes for Mrs Wilmot, which seems unlikely. What he probably saw was the top to back of the woman's head and then the white nightdress of her back as she bent down, and then a hurried exit. Frustratingly, although Mr Wilmot says that Mr Tait's account corresponded with his dream he does not record any detail of what Mr Tait actually said he had seen as corroboration. All we know from Miss Wilmot is that Mr Tait said that he had seen 'some woman in white' as a visual fact.

The two dreams

When, in Mr Wilmot's account, Mrs Wilmot tells him of her dream, including her observation of the recessed upper berth and its occupant, it all seems to fall into place. Her dream is now interpreted by both of them as an actual visitation by her, independently confirmed by Mr Tait. As for the apparent coincidence of the two dreams being on the same night, while Mrs Wilmot provided a firm time and date, there is no record of a very exhausted and sea-sick Mr Wilmot noting the date of his dream. It would have had no significance during the stormed-tossed nightmare and may have been on a different night. Once their dreams had been compared and their similarities recognised it would be natural for them to assume that their dreams had occurred during the same night at the same time. His comment that it occurred in the early morning of 13 October seems more likely to have been fixed in retrospective agreement following their discussion, than noted as such during the storm.

If Mrs Wilmot normally wore a white nightdress, then that is how she would have seen herself visiting him, and how Mr Wilmot would have dreamed of seeing her. Her bending down to the lower berth to touch and kiss him would have been the most natural thing for her to do and for him, in his dream, to see and feel her do. On the other hand, if the visitation was by a woman passenger wearing white night attire he may have half woken up when she disturbed him, seen her very briefly in the light of the swaying lantern, gone back to exhausted sleep and woven her image into a dream of his wife visiting him.

The upper berth recess

In support of the OBE hypothesis, surely Mrs Wilmot's question concerning the recessed upper berth provides confirmatory evidence that she saw something she could not otherwise have known unless her phantasmal self had actually visited the cabin that night. The first question to ask is whether her opening remark, as recorded from memory by Mr W.H.M. some 22 years later, was actually phrased as a question. It implies that she was unaware of the layout of stateroom berths despite living in a busy, ship-building, port with New York docks not far away. It implies that she had never seen the outward curve of the stern of a steamship from the shore before, or had been on board a steamship before, or knew that the state cabins were at the stern. On balance, this does seem rather unlikely. Socially, the family moved in successful middle class business circles, so that seeing off friends and family on trips abroad would have been a common event.

As Mr Wilmot would be away for three months, and as the 14-18 day voyage both ways across the stormy Atlantic was hazardous at best, it is not unreasonable to assume that she and the children accompanied Mr Wilmot by train to New York and went on board the brand new Cunard steamship *Olympus* to visit his state-room while he unpacked. The stern end state-rooms on these early steamships were standard in design and layout as the recessed upper berth followed the outward curve of the stern. If this was what happened, she may have asked her question a different way. Maybe she asked whether the state-room had a recessed upper berth like the one she had seen in the *Olympus* - although it still seems a very odd question. Alternatively, although she may not have consciously noted the layout of the berths, its visual familiarity just became part of her dream. When Mr Wilmot answers that the upper berth was recessed as she had seen it in her dream they would naturally have taken this as confirmation of her visit to him, as she had not seen this particular state-room on this particular Inman Line steam ship, as he had not sailed in her before.

As for Mr Tait looking at her, she would have known that her husband had booked a shared state-room both ways with Mr Tait who was to occupy the upper berth. She may even have met him during boarding. He seems to have been a family friend as Miss Wilmot visited him some three years later, a journey of some 450 miles by train. Her natural reticence on entering the stateroom in front of someone else when in her nightdress would have been

incorporated into her dream.

An overlooked reason for thinking that Mrs Wilmot had a dream, not an OBE, is that in an OBE you are said to have actually visited the site and can give a verifiable description of it. There is no mention in Mrs Wilmot's account of visiting a wildly swaying stateroom and storm lantern, with Mr Wilmot's bunk in constant motion and her having to keep her balance with it. If she had truly visited him and experienced the violence of what was happening she would have remembered it on waking.

Late 19th Century society

The Wilmots lived in a lively society of newspapers, books and clubs where ever new stories of telepathy, clairvoyance and mediumship were likely to have been matters for vigorous debate. Following the notorious Fox sisters and their séances, Spiritualism was all the craze at the time. Personally, the Wilmots were now certain that Mrs Wilmot really had visited him in her dream and Mr Tait really had seen her phantasmal presence in the stateroom. Their story would have interested everyone who heard it and the social milieu is likely to have been one of acceptance rather than scepticism. Repeated retelling of their experience would have inevitably shaped and reshaped memory over the 20 plus years of what they had said to each other on Mr Wilmot's return. The unidentified W.H.M. must have heard the story as told by Mr Wilmot, so presumably was a friend of the family. It had stayed in his mind, and in 1885, some 22 years later, he decided to write his account from memory, and send it to Mr Wilmot for correction as necessary. Mr Wilmot, in turn, annotated it in the margins, signed it, and returned it to W.H.M who then sent it to Mrs Sidgwick as Secretary of the SPR - who, in turn, asked Richard Hodgson if he could confirm the account.

There is no reason to doubt that Mr and Mrs Wilmot had similar dreams about her visiting him, and they may have occurred on the same night. There is also no reason to doubt that Mr Tait really did see 'some woman in white' on the same night as Mr Wilmot's dream. The simplest explanation is that there is nothing to explain beyond sheer coincidence of timing between three separate events; two similar dreams that may, or may not, have been dreamed on the same night by two people some 1,000 miles apart, and Mr Tait happening to see 'some woman in white' who was possibly a female stateroom passenger in a white nightdress who happened to be the

unwitting cause of Mr Wilmot's dream.

Rule of thumb

The 'rule of thumb' in psychical research is that every possible non psi explanation for an apparently anomalous event, or series of events, must be explored and eliminated before presenting a psi-based explanation as the only possible explanation. The question is, given what we know about this case, what conditions would be necessary to accept that it was an example of OBE projection beyond all reasonable doubt? Taking Mrs Wilmot's experience first, we would need to know for certain that she had no knowledge of the layout of a stateroom common to all the steam ships of the time with the recessed position of the upper berth; that she had never previously seen one, or seen a picture of one, or read a description of one, or heard Mr Wilmot or others describe one, and we do not know this for certain. Nor do we know for certain whether her odd question was phrased as recounted from memory over twenty years later.

We would need to know for certain that she did not know about Mr Tait sharing a cabin with her husband or, if she did know, that she did not know he would be occupying the upper berth. As for Mr Tait, we would need an independent description of what he saw in his own words. As it is, all we will ever know is that he saw "some woman in white", and despite Mr Wilmot's dream remained convinced that he saw a real woman not a phantom.

Conclusion

It would seem that the Wilmot case cannot meet such rule of thumb criteria in support of an OBE based explanation, as a series of non OBE explanations can be advanced that seem to fit what we know of the event equally well. The problem for the general reader who is trying to make up his or her mind as to the existence of psi phenomena such as OBE projections, telepathy and clairvoyance is that the Wilmot case, with two sceptical exceptions, can be found only in books or articles by authors presenting it without question as a well-attested example of psi-in-action, with little or no discussion as to possible non-psi explanations. When presented in summary form, especially when included in an anthology of OBE cases, it reads even more convincingly because summaries strip out much of the context, so the

summary is all the reader knows.

The prior bias in favour of an OBE explanation is evidenced by Carter and Kelly et al. In their dismissal of Blackmore's and Edwards's objections as 'misrepresentation of the reported facts and offhand dismissal of testimony that conflicts with their beliefs' these authors leave themselves open to the opposite charge that they have presented the case as persuasive evidence of their prior belief in the reality of OBE projections without any attempt to submit the account to an impartial critique.

On balance of probabilities, it would seem that this case should not be presented as an example of an OBE projection beyond reasonable doubt as there are at least equal, and possibly more likely, non OBE explanations.

Original publication: *JSPR.* Vol 77:164-176. July, 2013, as 'Did Mrs Wilmot cross the sea during an OBE in the pre-dawn hours of the 14th October, 1863?'

References

Blackmore, S. (1983). 'Are Out-of-Body Experiences Evidence for Survival?' *Anabiosis: Journal for Near Death Studies,* 3, 137-155.

Blanke, O. Arzy, S. (2005). The out-of-body experience: disturbed self-processing at the temporo parietal junction. *Neuroscientist,* 11(1), 16-24.

Broad, C.D. (1962). *Lectures on Psychical Research.* London, Routledge, Kegan & Paul.

Carter, C. (2012). *Science and the Afterlife Experience.* Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions.

Crookall, R. (1973). Out-of-Body Experiences and Survival. In J,D. Pearce-Higgins & G.S. Whitby, (Eds), *Life, Death & Psychical Research.* London: Rider & Co.

Edwards, P. (1996). *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination.* New York: Prometheus Books.

Evans, H. (2002). *Seeing Ghosts: Experiences of the Paranormal.* London: John Murray,

Green, C. (1968). *Out-Of-The-Body Experiences.* Oxford. Institute of Psychophysical Research.

Johnson, R, C. (1953). *The Imprisoned Splendour.* Norwich: Pelegrin Trust.

Kelly, E.F., Kelly, E.W., Crabtree, A., Gauld, A., Grosso, M., & Greyson, B. (2007). *Irreducible Mind: Towards a psychology for the 21st century.* Lanham, Maryland. Rowman & Littleman.

Lommel, van, P. (2007). *Consciousness beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience.* New York. Harper One.

Minero, L. (2014) *Demystifying the Out-of-Body Experience: A practical manual for exploration and personal evolution* Woodbury, Minn. Llewellyn Publications

Murphy, M. (1992). *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the further evolution of human nature.* New York: Jeremy P Tarcher/Putnam Book.

Myers, F.W.H. (1903/2001) *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death.* Charlottesville, VA: Studies in Consciousness/Russell Targ Edition, Hampton Roads,

Sidgwick, E.M. (1891). On the Evidence for Clairvoyance. *Proceedings SPR.* Vol VII, 41-47.

Tyrrell, G.N.M. (1953). *Apparitions*, 2nd ed. London: The Society for Psychical Research.

CHAPTER SIX

The Chaffin Will Case: James Pinkney Chaffin receives a dream message from his dead father concerning a second will

The 1925 Chaffin v Chaffin Will Case is probably one of the most widely quoted cases presented in support of the belief that there is life after death. It is taken as demonstrating beyond all reasonable doubt, and in this case beyond all legal doubt, that we survive as self-aware conscious beings with pre-death memories still intact. We retain an ongoing awareness of what is happening to those still living on this earthly plane and, as in this case, can acquire the ability to appear as ourselves in someone's dream to give a spoken message.

This case involved the discovery of a previously unknown second will, claimed by Chaffin Senior's sons to have been written by their father. Some four years after his death he had returned to reveal its whereabouts in a dream visitation to his second son, James Pinkney. These claims were upheld by the jury in an ensuing court case and the original will of 1905 was revoked. The verdict of the jury was widely interpreted by the general public as giving legal recognition to post mortem communication (Berger, 1988) and received worldwide publicity as a result.

To see whether what is known about the case justifies this interpretation of what transpired we need to adopt an impartial stance and consider afresh what happened and what might have happened. The following account is based upon copies of court documents, the two wills and their signatures, and accounts of the case contained in Salter (1928), Oaten (1928), and Roach (2007).

The Chaffin family

The Chaffin family, who farmed sugar cane and cotton, lived in and around Mocksville, a small country town in Davie County, North Carolina, some 400 miles south of New York. At the time of the 1925 court case the family consisted of Rachel, aged 77, widow of James L. Chaffin, and three of their four married sons in order of birth: John, James Pinkney, and Abner the fourth son, now in their late 40s to early 50s. Marshall, the third son, had

died in 1922, aged 46, seven months after the reading of the 1905 Will in December, 1921. Others directly involved were Susie, Marshall's widow, her late teenage son, James Pinkney's wife, and daughter Estelle, and Thomas Blackwelder and his daughter, who were neighbours.

Family events as they unfolded

In November 1905, James L. Chaffin, then aged 57, instructed his attorney to draw up a final will and testament in which he bequeathed his entire estate of one hundred and two acres to Marshall, his third son, aged 29, with no bequests to his wife or his other three sons, and no explanation. Dated November 16, 1905, it was signed by him in the presence of his attorney and two witnesses. As far as we know, the terms of this will were unknown to any of his sons. Some sixteen years later on 7th September 1921, James Chaffin, aged 73, died as a result of a fall. As no other will could be found the 1905 will was probated on 24 September 1921 and Marshall who, like his brothers, had his own farm, inherited his father's estate and effects in full, so he now owned a substantial combined property. His mother Rachel continued to live in the family home which was now his.

The terms of this will were unusual in the sense that they went against local custom whereby the first son, in this case John, inherited the family estate, with various bequests made to other members of the family. Whatever they felt about the will Marshall's brothers had no legal grounds on which to contest their lack of inheritance. Some seven months later on 7 April 1922 Marshall died from advanced heart disease and the whole estate duly passed to Susie as his widow.

James Pinkney's dream

One morning in late June, 1925, some four years after Chaffin Senior's death, James Pinkney, his second son, told his wife that the spirit of his father had appeared to him several times during the month in his dreams just before waking, standing by his bedside with a sorrowful expression before fading away. On this particular night his father had appeared again, this time wearing his familiar long black overcoat. He opened the overcoat and, as rather inaccurately reported in Mocksville's local paper the *Davie Record*, 'he pointed to the inside pocket and he said, "You'll find something about my last will in my overcoat pocket."' Accepting that it really was his father's

spirit and no ordinary dream, he went to see his mother who told him that she had given the old overcoat to John, the first son, who now lived in neighbouring Yadkin county some twenty miles away.

On 6 July, accompanied by his daughter Estelle, James Pinkney drove to his brother's home in his Model T Ford, and presumably in the presence of John and/or John's wife, searched the old overcoat and found that part of the lining of an inside pocket had been hand sewn together with something inside. On cutting the stitches he found a small roll of paper tied with string which contained not a last will, or even a reference to a will, but a message instructing the finder to 'Read the 27th Chapter of Genesis in my daddie's old bible'.

Feeling that he needed more witnesses to confirm whatever he might find next, he asked his neighbour Thomas Blackwelder and Blackwelder's daughter to accompany him, his wife and Estelle to his mother's home to find his paternal grandfather's old Bible. His mother could not remember where it was and joined them as they searched the house. They eventually found it in the drawer of an unused bureau in an upstairs room. It was in such a dilapidated state that when it was picked it up it fell apart into three sections. Blackwelder happened to pick up the Old Testament section that contained the 27th Chapter of Genesis and found two facing pages that had been folded over each other to form a pocket. Inside the pocket he found a single piece of ruled, yellow tablet paper. It was a handwritten will, signed and dated by James L. Chaffin, that read as follows:

> After reading the 27th chapter of Genesis, I, James, L. Chaffin, do make my last will and testament, and here it is. I want, after giving my body a decent burial, my little property to be equally divided between my four children, if they are living at my death, both personal and real estate, divided equal; if not living, give share to their children. And if she is still living you must all take care of your mammy. Now this is my last will and testament. Witness my hand and seal.
>
> Jas. L. Chaffin,
> This January 16, 1919.

In his signed statement for Mr Johnson, a North Carolina attorney inquiring into the case on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), Thomas Blackwelder confirmed this account of what had happened by saying 'I went with him and we made a search for the Bible and after some time we found it

in a bureau drawer in the second storey of the house. We took out the Bible which was quite old and in three pieces. I took one of the three pieces and Mr Chaffin took the other two pieces but it happened that the piece I had contained the Book of Genesis. I turned the leaves until I came to the 27th chapter, and there found two leaves folded inward, and there was a paper with writing folded in these two pages which purported to be the last will of Jas. L. Chaffin.'

The 1919 date indicates that this will was written fourteen years after the 1905 will, when Chaffin Snr would have been 71, and two years before his death in 1921. When discovered by Blackwelder on 6 July 1925, some four years had passed since his funeral. Although the signature on this new will had not been independently witnessed, it would still be legal under North Carolina law if, after being filed for probate, the Clerk of Davie County Superior Court accepted that it was in the handwriting of the deceased.

Through their attorneys the three brothers and their mother submitted this second will for probate on 14 July 1921, signing a joint affidavit to the effect that through familiarity with Chaffin Senior's handwriting they were convinced that it was in the hand of James L. Chaffin, deceased. Through her attorneys Susie Chaffin issued a challenge to the legitimacy of the will on behalf of herself and her son R. M. Chaffin. If she lost the case she would be disinherited from the family estate, and her son would forfeit his present inheritance to his grandfather's estate and be entitled to a quarter of its value only. As the newly discovered will was now the subject of legal challenge, the case was referred for trial before a judge and jury on a date in mid-December, 1925.

The trial

On the morning of the trial, with the Davie County Superior Court packed with townsfolk and reporters eager to witness a family feud, the jury was duly sworn in after the usual lengthy process of rejection and selection, and the judge adjourned the case until after lunch. When the court reconvened, and much to the bitter disappointment of everyone else present, a lawyer announced on behalf of both parties that during the interval an 'amicable settlement' had been reached. The defendant, Susie Chaffin, after due consideration, now accepted that this second will was written by the deceased and had therefore withdrawn her challenge. The following account is taken

from a copy of the minutes of the judgement under Mr W. B. Snow, Judge Presiding.

JUDGMENT BY CONSENT

In Re Will of J. L. CHAFFIN *Dead*

NORTH CAROLINA, DAVIE COUNTY. In Superior Court,

December Term, 1925.

JUDGMENT, DECREE:

This case coming on to be heard, and being heard, and the following issues having been submitted to the Jury, 'Is the paper writing dated January 16th, 1919, and every part thereof the last Will and Testament of the deceased — Jas. L. Chaffin?' Answer — 'Yes.'

And the Jury having answered said Issue Yes, it is now on the motion of E. H. Morris, A. H. Price and J. C. Busby, attorneys for the Plaintiffs, Ordered, Decreed, and Adjudged that the said last Will and Testament of James L. Chaffin deceased be recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Davie County in the Book of Wills, and that the Will dated November 16th, 1905, and probated on September 24th, 1921, Will Book No 2, Page 579, purporting to be the last will and Testament of the deceased James L. Chaffin is hereby cancelled, rescinded, annulled and made void.

What happened during lunch?

During the lunch break Susie was shown the will and her two lawyers advised her that her three brothers-in-law, her mother-in-law, and a Mr P. Richardson, had signed an affidavit to the effect that 'they were acquainted with the handwriting and signature of J. L. Chaffin having seen him write and sign his name' and 'verily believed' the signature was genuine. Furthermore, they could call other friends and acquaintances to testify to this effect. Whatever her personal doubts, Susie Chaffin had no way of refuting their united opinion. Realising that she would lose the case she withdrew her challenge and declared the will genuine. In return, the brothers offered to pay one thousand dollars to her son as compensation for his reduced expectations

from his grandfather's estate (equivalent to $15,400 in 2021).

Her public acceptance that the second will and signature was in the handwriting of the deceased, and the jury's verdict to that same effect, based upon her acceptance and her consequent withdrawal of her challenge, became national news. 'Dead Man returns in Dream' ran one local headline. 'Can the Dead speak from the Grave?' asked another. The answer it seems was a definite, legally recognised 'Yes they can and they do'.

The Society for Psychical Research inquiry

The court's decision ensured wide publicity in America and in Britain. In 1926 the SPR engaged Mr J. M. N. Johnson, a North Carolina attorney, to review the case and obtain signed statements from the main participants. In April 1927 he commenced his inquiry as a complete sceptic, but became so impressed with the perceived honesty of all involved that in his report to Mr W. H. Salter, Secretary of the SPR he said: 'I believe I am safe in asserting that if you once talked with these honest people and looked into their clear, unsophisticated countenances, your criticism would vanish into thin air as mine did.' They were, he said, all 'honest, honourable country people, in well-to-do circumstances' (Salter, 1928, p.523). Mr Johnson concluded that, however improbable the story might seem to be, his father's spirit really had visited James Pinkney for the purpose of revealing the whereabouts of a second will written and signed by himself.

Besides being Secretary of the SPR at the time, Mr Salter was also a practising barrister. As a seasoned investigator of alleged ghostly phenomena who later wrote a book on the subject (Salter, 1938), he remained unconvinced. In his reply to Mr Johnson he pointed out the puzzling features of the case. If Chaffin Snr had changed his mind, why not just see his attorney and draft a new will? Why write it on a piece of paper and hide it in the dilapidated, no longer used Bible that had belonged to his father? Why write a separate note saying to read the 27th chapter of Genesis without any explanation as to why? Why put the rolled-up note in his inside overcoat pocket and then hand sew the pocket lining up? Why didn't his spirit just tell James Pinkney that the will was in 'his daddie's old Bible?' After all, he must have known where it was, as he had put it there. Again, why wait four years before appearing to James Pinkney in dreams? None of this made any sense at all to a very sceptical Mr Salter because if, after the funeral, they had

thrown away their father's old overcoat, or had discarded the dilapidated old bible, the will would never have been found. It was all too chancy and too far fetched. Mr Salter ended his very sceptical reply to Mr Johnson inn true barrister language, saying

> 'There is, I admit, no limit to the folly of testators or the secretiveness of farmers, but the present testator seems to have pushed both these characteristics to the extreme. But for the apparition, his testamentary wishes would never have been carried out, and one can hardly suppose that during his life he counted upon being able to appear as a ghost'.

In reply Mr Johnson stuck firmly to his conclusions, and suggested the following scenario based upon hints dropped to him by a neighbour concerning the Chaffins. According to this neighbour local gossip had it that Chaffin Snr had 'lived in mortal fear' of his daughter-in-law Susie who, the neighbour thought, knew all about the 1905 will in her husband's favour. Unwilling to face her, he hid his new will, thinking that he would tell his sons where it was when he was dying but, unfortunately, died before telling them. Now living in spirit, and full of remorse at robbing three of his sons and his widow of their rightful inheritance, he decided that the only way he could inform them about the second will was to appear to one of them in their dreams. He chose James Pinkney, and after several dreams in which he just appeared and then disappeared, he appeared dressed in his old black overcoat, showed James the inside pocket of the overcoat and told him, according to James Pinkney's own testimony that 'You will find my will in my overcoat pocket'. As Mr Johnson saw it, 'this man J. P. Chaffin is an honest man and he thoroughly believes his father's spirit appeared to him and gave him the clue to the 1919 will'.

Salter, however, remained very unconvinced by this story, suggesting an alternative scenario in which John, or maybe Abner, faked the will, put it into the old Bible and then wrote the note which he stitched into the overcoat pocket. He absolved James Pinkney of lying by suggesting that he had acted as an innocent go-between, fooled into thinking that he'd seen and heard his father's spirit when, in fact, it was John who had quietly let himself into the bedroom dressed in the old overcoat, murmured those words in James Pinkney's ear, and crept out again (Roach, 2007, pp 227-8).

Public opinion

There the matter rested as far as a very sceptical secretary of the SPR was concerned. But for the public at large and for fervent believers in life after death in particular, the story had taken on a life of its own. Authors of books and articles on ghosts, apparitions and life after death communications included it as a legally validated case of post-mortem visitation by a father to his son to redress the balance of inheritance that he had got so badly wrong in his first will. Hilary Evans, an experienced investigator of ghosts and apparitions, accepted it as well validated evidence for post mortem survival, saying 'the famous Chaffin Will case, because legal issues were involved, is fully documented with affidavits from everyone involved, so the facts are not in dispute' (Evans, 2002, p. 104). The author Colin Wilson judged the case as offering 'one of the strongest pieces of evidence for survival after death' (Wilson, 1985, p. 124). David Fontana, psychologist, another experienced investigator of psychical phenomena, quotes the Chaffin case as one of the best known examples of 'apparitions who supply accurate information unknown to witnesses' (Fontana, 2005, pp 52-53), and refers readers to Arthur Berger (1988, pp. 34-39) for a full account and legal opinion. Berger, a retired American attorney who had been an instructor in law and a municipal attorney, concluded that the verdict of the court was the right one. As to possible fraud by James Pinkney and his brothers, Berger points out that Mr Johnson 'had used all his skill to cross-examine them to obtain some confession of knowledge of the will in the Bible or the roll of paper in the pocket of the overcoat but had failed'. Berger's opinion was that the late James. L. Chaffin really had appeared to James Pinkney, his second son, and the will was in his father's handwriting as attested by family and friends. In his review of the case, psychologist Chris Carter agrees with the general consensus, saying that this case was 'unusually-well authenticated, as all known facts were carefully scrutinised in a court of justice in 1925 in the case of Chaffin v. Chaffin' (Carter, 2012, p.120). James Pinkney's father had

definitely visited him in his pre-waking dreams and the second will was genuine. In a later discussion Carter repeats this assertion, saying that ‘it should be clear that this is an unusually well-researched and well documented case’ (p.122).

By 1938 even the sceptical Mr Salter had come to a reluctant and rather baffled conclusion that the will was genuine. It was, he said, either a case of ‘a supernormal agency of some kind’ or, as some people had suggested rather improbably, James Pinkney had known of the second will and had forgotten about it, but this knowledge had remained in his subconscious and a ‘latent memory had revived some years later and “externalised itself” in the form of repeated bedside visions”'. Given the 4 year interval between his father’s death and the dreams, Salter felt that the latter explanation was untenable and a ‘supernormal agency’ was the most likely explanation (Salter, 1938, pp 24-25).

What all these commentators are agreed upon is that the second will was written and signed by the late James. L. Chaffin, It’s previously unknown existence was revealed by his spirit appearing in his son’s dreams just prior to waking and telling him where it was, and all this was legally testified to by a jury. The whole case for post mortem communication by the deceased James L. Chaffin rests upon these widely accepted assumptions.

Comment

Despite its legal acceptance, including the strange circumstances involved in its discovery, the question still remains: was the second will written and signed by the deceased? What seems to have been overlooked by all commentators is that testimony as to its authenticity rested solely upon the opinion of family and friends that the second will was in Chaffin's handwriting and nothing else. Susie Chaffin’s withdrawal of her challenge in the face of this united opinion did not prove its authenticity, only her reluctant acceptance of its authenticity in the face of their united opinion. Nor did the verdict of the jury prove its authenticity. They never even saw the second will. The moment that Susie withdrew her challenge as to its authenticity their verdict as to its authenticity was a matter of legal formality consequent to her withdrawal.

Enter Mary Roach

Mary Roach, an American investigative reporter, journalist and author, who was writing a book on the evidence offered by believers for life after death, tackled this question directly in her 2007 book *Six Feet Over: Adventures in the Afterlife* (pp 223-226). In April 2004 she visited Mocksville to talk to James Pinkney's two elderly grandsons Lester and Lloyd in an attempt to discover what stories had been handed down through the family. Both remained convinced that their grandfather really had been visited by his father's spirit who wished to redress a wrong and direct him to the second will. When Lester was a teenager grandfather James Pinkney used to tell him the story of the dream and what happened afterwards.

His mother Estelle had described their dusty and rackety journey in their Ford Model T to John's house and their eventual discovery of the grubby old overcoat, covered in 'dirt dobber' (old wasp nests), and its sewn up inside pocket. They dismissed Salter's theory that John had impersonated a ghost on the basis that 'like Pink, John didn't talk much. Didn't go for foolishness'. As for James Pinkney making it up, 'Pink would never have thought of that' said Lester. 'Nope,' said Lloyd, 'he would have considered that crooked'. They described their grandfather as an honest, practical, Baptist church-going farmer, who worked long hours, was probably not very imaginative and not known for any form of psychical experience except for this once.

Was the second will in Chaffin Senior's handwriting?

Through the cooperation of the Clerk of Davie County Superior Court, Mary Roach was able to see both the 1905 will and the 1919 second will. To test the authenticity of the signature on the second will as compared to the signatures on the first will, she had hired Mr Grant Sperry, President of the Society of Questioned Document Examiners, who had been an expert witness in over three hundred federal and state cases. Questioned Document Examination is a forensic discipline concerning the provenance of documents in dispute in a court case by comparative analysis with other documents known to be genuine.

Both wills were scanned into a computer and loaded in parallel onto the computer screen so that Sperry could compare the signatures, both side by

side and by overlay as well. According to Sperry, handwriting legibility reaches its peak by the early teen years, and then slowly deteriorates during the middle decades, with a more rapid decline in old age when stiffer fingers and reduced lack of fine control by the nervous system adversely affect legibility. Handwriting never, ever, improves with advancing age.

Comparison of signatures

When Sperry compared the 1905 signature, written when Chaffin Snr was 57, with the 1919 signature when he would have been 71, he found individual letters in the latter signature, particularly the '*ff*' better formed and written in a more continuous flow than in the 1905 signature.

In Sperry's opinion the individual letters in the 1905 signature were shaped more stiffly, implying that his penmanship was not very skilled or much practised. What is relevant here is that Chaffin Snr was born in 1848, and when he was growing up illiteracy in rural North Carolina was very high. Attendance at school was limited to a few years during winter months only, as all hands were needed on the farms for the rest of the year. The signature on the 1919 will showed no evidence of anyone trying to carefully forge Chaffin Senior's signature. Like the will itself it was written in a more flowing script and the 1919 signature is more legible that the 1905 signature (Figure 1). Sperry concludes his analysis by saying 'if the J. L. Chaffin signatures on the 1905 will are representative of that particular writer's skill level, and I see no evidence that they are not, then that writer *could not* have written the signature on the 1919 will' (p.238, my italics). The second will, Sperry concluded, was a fake. When Sperry compared James Pinkney's signature on a court document with the signature on the second will he found no similarity, confirming that James Pinkney did not write the will.

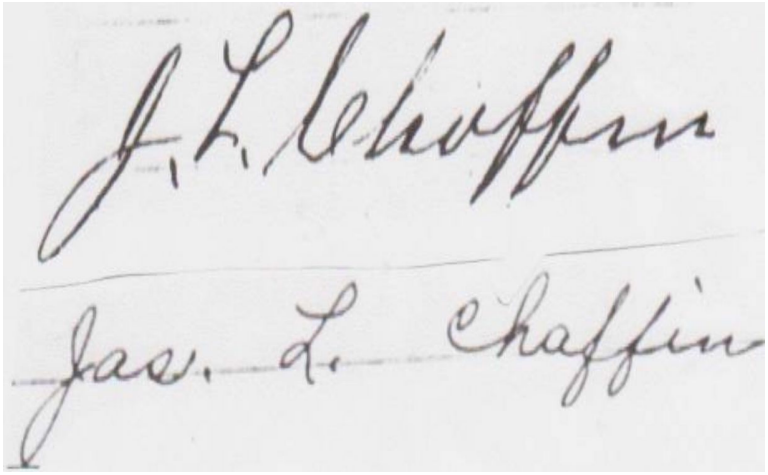


Figure 1. Comparison between signatures of James L. Chaffin as written in the 1905 Will (top) and the 1919 Second Will (bottom)

Comment

A consistent feature in the 1905 will and the handwritten court documents relating to this trial is the very angular, copperplate, right-sloping script. This suggests that everyone in that area used the same infant school primer and copied that form of script, so their writing looks very similar in style. Another feature of the court documents is that, as in the 1905 will, it seemed common formal practice for everyone to be referred to by their forename initials and surname only, and they signed the same way. The one exception was John who signed as *'John, A. Chaffin'*. We tend to reserve a particular form of signature for official documents so that if there is any suspicion of forgery these signatures can be compared. With this in mind it is instructive to compare the two wills.

The text of the 1905 will is written by his attorney's clerk, but is signed three times by Chaffin Snr in the spaces provided. The opening sentence commences as *'I, J. L. Chaffin of the aforesaid County…'*, and later *'In witness thereof I the said J. L. Chaffin…'*, and finally is signed *'J. L. Chaffin'*. This consistency of signature using forename initials only, is at odds with the signature on the 1919 will where, after reference to Genesis 27, the second line opens with *'I James. L. Chaffin do make my last will and testament'* and is signed *'Jas. L. Chaffin'* — Why *'James. L.'* and *'Jas. L'* instead of *'J.L.'* on what is supposed to be his second will?

Was 'Jas' a diminutive used by family and friends instead of the more formal 'James' and therefore used by him in when writing to them? If so,

then whoever wrote the second will would have been familiar with that form of signature only, and would naturally assume that it was Chaffin's normal signature. This may also be the reason why family and friends were so convinced that it was his signature and therefore must be his will. In the circumstances Susie had no alternative but to agree. They would have been unaware of his formal '*J.L. Chaffin*' signature because they would never have seen it, and no one had thought to check the second will signature against the three, consistent, 1905 signatures.

Chaffin family relations

We have no firm information about the relationships between the four brothers, or between Chaffin Snr and each of his sons in 1905, or at the time of his death in 1921, nor of their relationship with Susie. There are, however, a few clues. According to Lester when talking to Mary Roach, Chaffin Snr and Rachel went to live with Marshall after their house burned down in around 1902-3, and stayed there until the house was rebuilt, Marshall married Susie in 1904, and the will in favour of Marshall was made in November 1905.

Following their father's death in September 1921, the 1905 will was published, and the unexpected inheritance of the whole of his father's estate and effects by Marshall became public knowledge throughout the close-knit farming community. The implied family disharmony would have been a matter of local speculation. It is possible that a strong sense of implied paternal rejection stretching back to before 1905 may have united the three brothers. If so, they had to endure the sight of their brother adding their father's estate and effects to his holdings, and Susie inheriting the combined estate following Marshall's death some seven months later in April, 1922.

The second will

If Sperry is correct, and their father did not write the rolled up note, or compose and sign the second will, then someone else did. They composed what Sperry refers to as 'homespun legalese', then signed and backdated the will to 1919, two years before his death in 1921. They wrote the note and chose its reference to Genesis 27 in 'my daddie's old bible'. They then placed the rolled up note in the inside overcoat pocket and stitched it up, put the will in the folded-over pages of Genesis chapter 27, and placed, or returned, the

no longer used Bible in the top drawer of a dresser in an upstairs room of his widow's house.

Whoever that someone was, whether singular or plural, they must have done all this with the full intention that the note would be 'accidentally discovered' by them who, naturally puzzled, would take it to one of the sons. This would lead to the second will being discovered in the old bible, submitted for probate, and accepted in court as being in the handwriting of the deceased. For whoever did this, it seems that the intended end justified the fraudulent means. It probably took months in the secretive planning and execution, and the intervening four years to backlogged 1919 would add to the appearance of chance discovery.

Genesis 27

Like most of the local community the Chaffins were brought up as Baptists and would have attended the local Baptist church. They, like everyone else, would have known their Bible well. Chapter 27 recounts how Jacob, the smooth skinned, hairless second son, who was his mother's favourite and born immediately after his non-identical, very hairy twin Esau, tricked his dying, blind old father Isaac into giving him Esau's birthright as the first born. He did this by dressing in Esau's clothes, wearing hair-backed kid gloves, and thereby obtained Isaac's blessing and full inheritance that could be given once only. This deception was his mother Rebekah's idea as she preferred him to Esau and was even willing to take upon herself any consequent curse.

The rolled up note in the overcoat did not say 'You will find my will in Genesis 27 in my daddie's old bible' but instructed the finder to 'Read the 27th chapter of Genesis'. They were bound to do so, leading to the discovery of the second will in the folded over pages that opens by telling the finder that 'After reading the 27th chapter of Genesis, I, James, L. Chaffin, do make my last will and testament…..'.

With the whole bible to choose from Genesis 27 seems a very strange choice for their father to make, as it tells, by inference, a very unedifying story of betrayal, portraying the mother as initiating the deception, the son carrying it out, and the father being deceived. It doesn't really make any sense, as it does not seem to parallel the Chaffin situation as no one even knew the contents of the 1905 will until 1921, and that provided no

explanation.

Instead, it seems that Genesis 27 was the deliberate choice of whoever wrote the note and will, and must therefore have reflected their opinion. Were they hoping that the community might draw inferences from the biblical story to the effect that the estate had somehow been inherited by Marshall through some form of deception, and then inherited by a very undeserving Susie? Was the will aimed at depriving Susie of an unfairly acquired inheritance? We will never know. We do not know what relationships were like between her and her brothers-in-law and mother-in-law. What we do know is that the three brothers offered her son, their nephew, a thousand dollars ($15,600 in 2021) as compensation for his loss of three quarters of his grandfather's estate. There is no mention of such an offer being made to Susie as she would remained the legitimate owner of Marshall's estate.

The question is: who was that someone(s)?

To try and answer that question we need to summarise what can reasonably be known, or inferred, from this re-examination of the case:

1. Based upon Sperry's analysis of the 1905 and 1919 signatures Chaffin Senior did not write the second will (see figure 1 for signature comparison).
2. At some time between his death in 1921 and James Pinkney's dreams in June, 1925, someone else wrote, signed and backdated the will, decided that Genesis chapter 27 was an appropriate biblical reference, and wrote the note. Either they, or they and an accomplice, planted the will in the folded over pages of Genesis 27 in the old Bible, put it in the upstairs bureau drawer, placed the rolled up note in the inside pocket of the old overcoat and sewed up the pocket lining.
3. According to Sperry's comparison of James Pinkney's signature with the signature on the second will, he definitely did not write it
4. When the jury was asked, 'Is the paper dated January 16th, 1919 and every part thereof the last will and Testament of the Deceased – Jas. L. Chaffin?' they answered "Yes" as the challenge had been withdrawn and others had signed an affidavit to the effect that they recognised his handwriting This answer was the only possibly legal verdict once Susie's legal challenge was withdrawn. It was legally correct, but factually incorrect.

5. According to all who knew him, including attorney Mr Johnson, James Pinkney was an honest man. He truly believed that his father's spirit had appeared to him to reveal the existence of a second will to right the previous wrong of leaving his entire estate to Marshall, his third son, and then by inheritance at his death to Susie.
6. According to Mr Johnson, who interviewed them in 1927, the three brothers and their families were all living in comfortable 'well-to-do circumstances' and their mother still lived in the family home.

Out of the many unknowns in this case we have three certainties (1, 3, and 4), one inferred certainty (2) as a consequence of (1). An accepted certainty as to character (5), and one perceived certainty as to the 'well-to-do' circumstances of the surviving brothers and their mother (6).

Implications of point 6

Point 6 means that the three brothers, now in their late forties to early fifties, had no financial motive for carrying out such a complicated forgery fraught with possible exposure. They were respected farmers with growing families living in a rural community, and had had four years to adjust to the conditions of the 1905 will. Each was comfortably off by local standards, probably owned several hundred acres for self sufficiency, and would inherit only a quarter of their late father's small estate (some 25.5 acres each) as Susie's son would also be entitled to a quarter.

They would have known that Susie would have no alternative but to challenge a second, unwitnessed, will on behalf of herself and her son, and had no idea how far her lawyers might go in possibly hiring experts in handwriting to challenge its authenticity. They would have realised that to be associated with such a frankly implausible way of revealing the existence of this new will to their advantage would receive wide publicity and possible ridicule. If they lost the case on grounds of deception by forgery they would receive prison sentences and social ruin would have been a certainty. Why, in their circumstances four years after their father's death, would they even contemplate carrying out such a mad idea?

Who is left?

The most likely person to write the note and will is someone who may have

witnessed the distress felt by the brothers, particularly by John, at their father's rejection of them all those years ago in favour of Marshall, and the fact that he had not changed his mind over the intervening sixteen years between 1905 and his accidental death in 1921. That person, or persons, must have felt a strong desire to secretly rectify this perceived wrong on their behalf which would disinherit Susie. Maybe, for personal reasons, the latter was the stronger motive. It could have been a brother-in-law or sister-in-law of one of the brothers or their wives, or a very close family friend of the three brothers and their families. As long as they did not say or act in such a way as to bring suspicion upon themself, or themselves, they would not be at any risk of discovery.

How was the second will to be discovered?

It had to be discovered by one of the brothers by apparent chance, starting with the note in the stitched up inside pocket of the overcoat, leading them to the will enclosed in Genesis 27 of the old Bible. One possible way to do this without arousing suspicion would have been for the perpetrator to borrow the old overcoat from John on some practical sounding pretext such as a very dusty job, then be 'puzzled' by the stitched up pocket as they had felt something rolled up inside it and, after undoing the stitching, to find this strange note. The coat and note would then be taken to one of the brothers, possibly back to John, to ask what on earth they thought it meant, and events would unroll from thereon without any further involvement. Just a sheer chance discovery.

The masterstroke of deception here was the reference to 'my daddie's old bible' with its strong implication that only their father could have written it. As Chaffin Snr's father had been the Rev. Nathan S. Chaffin, possibly a previous minister of their local Baptist church, he may often have used that phrase when reminiscing about his father. If this was the intended plan it was quite spectacularly overtaken by the most unlikely and impossible to predict event.

James Pinkney's dreams

For some unknown reason James Pinkney started to dream of his father in June, 1925. In his signed statement for Mr Johnson the attorney on April 21, 1927, he said (as quoted in Oaten, 1928, p. 6)

> In all my life I never heard my father mention having made a later will than the one dated in 1905. I think it was in June of 1925 that I began to have very vivid dreams that my father appeared to me at my bedside but made no verbal communication. Some time later, I think it was in the latter part of June, 1925, he appeared at my bedside again, dressed as I had often seen him in life, wearing a black overcoat, which I knew to be his own coat. This time my father's spirit spoke to me, he took hold of his overcoat this way and pulled it back and said "You will find my will in my overcoat pocket" and then disappeared. The next morning I arose fully convinced that my father's spirit had visited me for the purpose of explaining some mistake. I went to my mother's and sought for the overcoat but found that it had gone.

His mother then remembered that she had given the old overcoat to John. A week or so later on 6 July he and Estelle drove to John's house, and the astonishing chain of events continued from there. He concluded his statement to Mr Johnson by saying 'Many of my friends do not believe it is possible for the living to hold communication with the dead, but I am convinced that my father actually appeared to me on these several occasions, and I shall believe it to the day of my death (quoted in Oaten, 1928, p.8).

This is an interesting comment to make, as prior to his dreaming he probably thought the same as his friends. What is noticeable here is that his father's spirit was incorrect when, as James Pinkney remembered it, he said that 'You will find my will in my overcoat pocket'. But as barrister W. H. Salter had asked, why on earth would he say that? If he had placed his second will in the Bible and not in the sewn up overcoat pocket, he would have known that. Why use the overcoat at all? Not only was it pointless, but the note did not even refer to a will as such. It merely told the finder to 'Read the 27th chapter of Genesis in my daddie's old bible'. So, assuming 'daddie's old bible' still existed and could be found, the finder of the note still had no idea why they were directed to read Genesis chapter 27. A possible explanation for this fundamental error on the part of his father's spirit is given in the following scenario.

A possible scenario

Anyone who has read Plimmer and King's book *Beyond Coincidence* (2004), recounting over two hundred stories of the most astonishing and impossible to predict coincidences, will know that the apparently highly improbable is far more likely to occur than we assume in our everyday life. It only seems improbable in the sense that when we do not know the chain, or chains, of events leading up to the moment of coincidence we have no way of accounting for it.

Maybe, puzzled by why he was dreaming about his father after all this time, James Pinkney happened to mention it to the forger while chatting. In anticipation of how they wanted events to unfold, they saw a completely unexpected opportunity. Perhaps, they said, his father was appearing because he was still troubled by the hurt he had caused to him and his brothers by his 1905 will. They knew that it sounded incredibly unlikely but 'what if, say, just for argument's sake, he had secretly written a second will to redress the injustice and, say, put it in his overcoat pocket with the intention of telling them at some time, but his unexpected and fatal fall and had happened first?'

James Pinkney may have forgotten this speculative suggestion as the busy farming season was in full summer swing but the mental image of his father doing this was now in his mind. Maybe, a couple of nights later, when falling asleep he was turning this over in his mind, imagining his father putting the will in his old overcoat. Again, just before waking, he dreamed of his father again, but this time his dreaming mind created a vivid picture of his father wearing the familiar black overcoat, pulling it back and saying, 'You will find my will in my overcoat pocket'. So vivid was this dream that James Pinkney was convinced that his father's spirit had returned from the dead to tell him the whereabouts of a previously unknown will. If something like this did happen it offers a possible explanation why his father's spirit got the message so wrong. He was saying what James Pinkney had already imagined him doing with the will.

An overlooked medical condition

In all the discussion about this case one point has been consistently overlooked. Their father's 1905 will stated its unusual instruction without

explanation. One of the two witnesses who signed it in the presence of Chaffin Snr and his attorney was a certain '*J .C. Chaffin*'. Note the forename initials again. Whoever that relative was, maybe a brother, it is likely that he would have known the reason and agreed with it or he would not have signed it.

Marshall died of advanced heart failure some seven months after the will was read in 1921. If Chaffin Snr knew in 1905 that Marshall, then in his late twenties, had been diagnosed with a heart condition for which, at the time, nothing could be done, he may have decided that leaving his entire estate to Marshall would ensure a certain future for Susie and any children by ensuring a more certain income from the combined estate. Realising that this would be a difficult conversation to have he said nothing to anyone, presumably including Rachel. In his mind it may have been an interim measure that he intended to rescind if, through medical advances, Marshall was cured. This may be the reason why he never made another will. He would have seen that Marshall was showing increasing symptoms of heart failure over the fourteen years between the 1905 will and his own unfortunate death from a fall in 1921.

If this interpretation is correct, then the conditions of the 1905 will were not the 'perplexing act of filial betrayal' as described by Mary Roach (p.225) and assumed by all other commentators. It was a practical decision to protect Susie and any future grandchildren financially. If this was the real reason then Chaffin senior had nothing to reproach himself for. He had no reason to write a second will depriving Susie of her inheritance in the case of Marshall's death, and reducing his grandson's inheritance to a quarter of his estate, or to appear to James Pinkney in a dream to set its discovery in motion. There may have been another reason for the 1905 will. Maybe it was a 'Thank you' to Marshall for looking after him and Rachel while their house was rebuilt.

Discussion

We will never know for certain what happened, hence all the 'maybes'. We have no idea whether their mother Rachel knew about the conditions in the 1905 Will or, if not, how she reacted when it was read. We do not know how it affected her relationship with Marshall, and then with Susie after she inherited the estate. What we do know is that she joined her three sons in

defending the authenticity of the second will and the consequent disinheritance of Susie.

Chris Carter seems to speak for all his fellow commentators when he says that as an example of post-mortem communication this has been ‘an unusually well-researched and well documented case’ (Carter, 2012). But we now know that this is very far from true. Until Mary Roach engaged Grant Sperry in 2004 there is no mention of anyone on either side, including the attorneys, who even seems to have thought of visually comparing the 1905 and 1919 signatures, let alone asking for an expert opinion, even though the opportunity to do so had been there all along, as the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners was founded in 1913.

Everyone who has accepted that the second will was written and signed by Chaffin Snr has done so on the basis that witnesses, comprised of family and friends, were prepared to go on oath to say that in their opinion it was genuine. It is likely that they did so because they were familiar with “*Jas. L. Chaffin”* as his signature, and assumed it was the one he used at all times. Susie Marshall had no option except to withdrew her challenge. In consequence the jury, who never saw the second will, arrived at their verdict as a legal formality.

But according to Sperry’s comparative analysis of the signatures the will was a forgery. It would seem that the motive of the unknown forger, or forgers, was to obtain legal recognition of the second will, a redistribution of the estate in favour of the brothers and disinheritance of Susie.

Conclusion

Based on analysis of the handwriting of both documents, the second will was a fake. It was not even a forgery in the accepted sense that whoever wrote it tried to deceive by copying Chaffin Senior’s style of writing and his signature. They wrote it in their own, right sloping, hand, common at the time, and signed it with a form of his signature with which they were familiar. What they never expected was the truly astonishing turn of events in which James Pinkney commenced to dream of his father and, possibly through a chance conversation with them, became convinced that his father’s spirit had led him first to the note in the old overcoat, and then to the will placed in Genesis 27 of his “daddie’s old bible”.

The belief that we survive death as self aware beings and can, on

occasion, communicate with those left behind is not, in itself, invalidated by these findings. The argument put forward in this re-examination of the Chaffin v. Chaffin will case is that this case offers no support for this belief. Whoever faked the second will took their secret to the grave with them, and their spirit, or spirits, have never returned to tell anyone.

Acknowledgements

I wish to place on record my very grateful thanks to Mary Roach who kindly emailed full copies of both written wills, enlarged copies of both signatures and copies of relevant court documents. For the purpose of this paper these two signatures were brought together so that the reader can compare their similarities or their differences for themselves. I also wish to thank Dr Tom Ruffles for his encouragement and unfailing support when first writing this up for journal submission.

Originally published: *JSPR 77:* 89-101. April 2013, as 'The Chaffin Will Case Revisited: Did the Spirit of his Deceased Father visit James Pinkney Chaffin during June, 1925, to reveal the whereabouts of a Second Will?'

References

Berger, A. S. (1988). *Evidence of Life After Death: A casebook for the tough minded.* New York. Charles C Thomas, (reissued in 2010 by the Survival Research Foundation, Aventura, Florida.)

Carter, C. (2012). *Science and the Afterlife Experience.* Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions.

Evans, H. (2002). *Seeing Ghosts: Experiences of the paranormal*. London. John Murray.

Fontana, D. (2005). *Is There An Afterlife? A comprehensive overview of the evidence.* Ropley, Hampshire: O Books.

Oaten, E.W. (1928). *The Chaffin Will Case.* Manchester: The Two Worlds Publishing Co.

Slimmer, M., & King, B (2004). *Beyond Coincidence: Stories of amazing coincidences and the mystery and mathematics that lie behind them,* Cambridge, UK. Icon books,

Coach, M. (2007). *Six Feet Over: Adventures in the Afterlife*. Edinburgh. Canongate Books.

Coach, M. (2013). Personal communication re copies of the wills and court documents.

alter W. H. (1928). Case of the Will of James, L, Chaffin. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol. XXXV1 pp 517-24.

alter, W. H. (1938). *Ghosts and Apparitions*. London: Bell and Sons.

Wilson, C. (1985). *Afterlife: An investigation of the evidence for life after death*. London: Harrap.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mrs Agnes Paquet Experiences a Vision of Her Brother's Death by Drowning

In this chapter we look at the case of Mrs Agnes Paquet who lived in Chicago. She reported having a detailed vision of her brother's death before she was told by her husband that he had drowned. The vision occurred on the 24th October 1889, and was thoroughly investigated by a Mr Wood, an experienced investigator acting on behalf of the American Society for Psychical Research.

The case centres on a report by Mrs Paquet that while at home on her own one morning she experienced a vision in which she saw her brother being pulled over the stern of a ship by a loop of towline around his legs, leading to his death by drowning in Chicago harbour. The following official statement, together with signed reports from Mrs Paquet and her husband, is taken from Eleanor Sidgwick's 1891 paper reviewing verified cases of clairvoyance (pp 32-34). This is an important case because it is difficult to see how any non-ESP explanation based upon the idea that hallucinations are invariably caused by some form of momentary brain malfunction can explain what occurred.

Official statement of the accident

'On October 24th, 1889, Edmund Dunn, brother of Mrs Agnes Paquet, was serving as fireman on the tug *Wolf,* a small steamer engaged in towing vessels in and out of Chicago Harbour. At about 3 a.m., the tug fastened to a vessel inside the piers to tow her up the river. While adjusting the tow-line, Mr Dunn fell or was thrown overboard by the tow-line and drowned. The body, though sought for, was not found until about three weeks after the accident when it came to the surface near the place where Mr Dunn

disappeared.'

Mrs Paquet's statement to Mr Wood

'I arose about the usual hour on the morning of the accident, probably about six o'clock. I had slept well throughout the night, had no dreams or sudden awakenings. I awoke feeling gloomy and depressed, which feeling I couldn't shake off. After breakfast my husband went to his work and, at the proper time, the children were gotten ready and sent to school, leaving me alone in the house. Soon after this I decided to steep and drink some tea, hoping that it would relieve me of the gloomy feelings aforementioned. I went into the pantry, took down the tea canister, and as I turned around my brother Edmund – or his exact image – stood before me and only a few feet away. The apparition stood with back toward me, or, rather, partially so, and was in the act of falling forward – away from me – seeming impelled by two ropes or a loop of rope drawing against his legs. The vision lasted but a moment, disappearing over a low railing or bulwark, but was very distinct. I dropped the tea, clasped my hands to my face and exclaimed 'My God! Ed is drowned.' At about half-past ten a.m. my husband received a telegram from Chicago announcing the death of my brother. When he arrived home he said to me "Ed is sick in hospital at Chicago; I have just received a telegram" to which I replied "Ed is drowned, I saw him go overboard." I then gave him a minute description of what I had seen. I stated that my brother, as I saw him, was bareheaded, had a heavy, blue sailor's shirt, no coat, and that he went over the rail or bulwark. I noticed that his pants legs were rolled up enough to show the white lining inside. I also described the appearance of the boat at the point where my brother went overboard. I am not nervous, and neither before nor since have I had an experience in the least degree similar to the above related. My brother was not subject to fainting or vertigo.'

Mr Paquet's statement to Mr Wood

'At about 10.30 a.m, October 24th, 1889, I received a telegram from Chicago announcing the drowning of my brother-in-law, Edmund Dunn, at 3 o'clock that morning. I went directly home, and wishing to break the force of the sad news I had to convey to my wife I said to her "Ed is sick

in hospital in Chicago; I have just received a telegram." To which she replied "Ed is drowned; I saw him go overboard." She then described to me the appearance and dress of her brother as described in her statement, also the appearance on the boat etc.

I started at once for Chicago and when I arrived I found the appearance of that part of the vessel as described by my wife to be exactly as she had described it though she had never seen the vessel; and the crew verified my wife's description of her brother's dress etc except that they thought he had his hat on at the time of the accident. They said that Mr Dunn had purchased a pair of pants a few days before the accident occurred, and as they were a trifle long before, wrinkling at the knees, he had worn them rolled up, showing the white lining as seen by my wife.

The captain of the tug who was at the wheel at the time of the accident seemed reticent. He thought that my brother-in-law was taken with a fainting fit or vertigo and fell overboard backward; but a sailor named Frank Yemont told a friend of mine that he stood on the bow of the vessel that was to be towed and saw the accident. He stated that my brother-in-law was caught by the towline and thrown overboard as described by my wife. I think that the captain, in his statement, wished to avoid responsibility as he had no right to order a fireman – my brother-in-law's occupation – to handle the towline. My brother-in-law was never, to my knowledge, subject to fainting or vertigo.'

Mr Paquet's account of what he saw regarding the stern of the tug, what he learned from the crew regarding what his brother-in-law was wearing, especially with regard to the rolled up pants showing their white lining, and Frank Yemont's description of what he saw from the bow of the vessel about to be towed, matches the scene Mrs Paquet said that she saw during the brief interval of her apparitional experience.

Discussion

It is worth carefully re-assessing what occurred. Mrs Paquet said that she was not of a nervous disposition, that she had slept well and had never had such an experience before or since. To her knowledge her brother was not subject to fainting fits or vertigo. As for the timing of her vision, she had told her husband of seeing the apparition of her brother and the cause of his fatal

accident by drowning *before* he had had a chance to tell her that Ed was not sick in hospital, but dead. Her experience, therefore, was not occasioned by any prior knowledge of her brother's accident. It is also important to note that she would have had no reason to be worried about him in relation to the danger of casting towlines as he was a ship's fireman, so casting and attaching tow ropes from the stern of a tug to the bow of a ship to be towed was not one of his duties.

She did not ascribe her mood on waking to any premonitory concern about anyone in the family, so she was totally unprepared for seeing a vivid apparition of her brother being pulled forward over the stern of the tugboat by towlines looping around the back of his legs. What she 'saw' in her vision, including how he was dressed, followed the unfolding sequence of her brother's fatal accident. Her apparitional experience was not coincident in time, as her brother's accident happened around 3am, some six hours earlier, when she was sound asleep.

We can imagine that the apparition she saw was similar to a holographic 3D imagery sequence briefly projected into the central space of the kitchen. Such was the visual certainty of the imagery that she spontaneously exclaimed 'My God! Ed is drowned' before her husband came home with the news of her brother's death.

We know from Mr Wood's report that there seems to be three possible witness sources for Mrs Paquet's vision: her brother's mind as he felt the ropes coil round his legs and drag him overboard to drown, the mind of Frank Yemont who definitely did see the accident, or the mind of someone on the tug who saw Edward fall away from them over the stern. The captain was at the wheel, probably looking towards the bow as the tug tightened the ropes over the stern preparatory to towing the ship, so he probably did not see the accident. Her brother's experience of feeling the ropes coil round his legs and pull him over the low stern rail is not how she saw what occurred. She saw him fall away from her as an observer. Mr Yemont was on the bow of the vessel to be towed, so he saw Mr Dunn fall over the low stern rail of the tug towards him as the ropes tightened. This confirmed her vision of what had occurred, but was not the viewpoint of her vision.

It would seem that the likely source was the horrified mind of someone on the tug looking towards the stern, as this closely matches Mrs Paquet's vision of her brother falling away from her. The vision was unable to break

through her deep sleep, but it seems reasonable to assume that, stored in her subconscious mind, it was the cause of her sense of gloomy depression she could not account for at the time, and broke into her consciousness after her husband and children had left and she was on her own.

Conclusion

Assuming that we accept this case as one of honest and accurate reportage (and there seems no reason not to do so) Mrs Paquet's apparitional vision of her brother's fatal accident as he was pulled forward by the tow ropes over the low stern rail of the tug seems unaccountable in terms of any non-ESP explanation. Mr Wood's signed accounts of Mrs Paquet's apparitional experience, and Mr Paquet's description of what his wife had said to him when he returned home, together with descriptions of the clothes he was wearing, and Mr Paquet's later viewing of the circumstances of his brother-in-law's accident, confirm the details as given in her account.

This case could fall under the category of a crisis apparition, usually taken as coming from the person in crisis at around the same time. But the problem with that interpretation is that Mrs Paquet did not see her brother as he would have experienced his fall, she saw her brother's accident as if she was an observer looking towards the stern as he fell away from her. Whatever the source, it seems that it entered her subconscious while she slept, making her feel uncharacteristically gloomy and depressed on waking, and was suddenly 'released' as a vision as she turned from the pantry with the tea canister to re-enter the kitchen.

Originally published: *PR*. Issue 69: 1-5. January, 2014 as 'Mrs Agnes Paquet meets Anomalistic Psychology'.

Reference

Sidgwick, E. (1891). On the evidence for clairvoyance. Part 1. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.* 7:30-39.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Colonel Henderson sees a crisis apparition of Captain Hinchliffe and hears him speak in great distress

The only publicly available account of Colonel Henderson's distressing experience of seeing an apparition of a distraught Captain Hinchliffe is recounted by the American author John G. Fuller in his 1979 book *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*. Fuller's account has been quoted by the late American psychologist and parapsychologist Lawrence Le Shan in his book *A New Science of the Paranormal* (2009, p.3), as describing a genuine example of a crisis apparition, and is quoted as such without challenge in online websites.

A crisis apparition is said to have occurred if someone unexpectedly sees, and maybe hears, an apparition of someone they know who, unknown to them is gravely ill, badly injured, or has just died. In his *An Introduction to Parapsychology* (2004, 4th edition) Harvey Irwin says that 'By convention an apparitional experience qualifies as a crisis only if the apparitional figure is experienced no more than 12 hours before or after the crisis' (p.201). A direct causal relationship is assumed to have been established between the mind of the person in dire distress, including the moment of death, and the mind of the person who sees their apparition at around the same time. The assumption is that they would not have had such an apparitional experience if the other person had not been in dire circumstances.

In this re-examination of this case I was joined by my colleague Steve Hume, who is an IT expert, and we divided our inquiry into two parts. In Part One we examined whether the case as presented by Fuller meets the standards of evidence that would qualify it as a crisis apparition beyond reasonable doubt, and this led us to our initial conclusion. In Part Two we subjected these findings to an in-depth inquiry, including a search for a crucial newspaper letter quoted by Fuller, and came to a final conclusion.

Part One. The account according to John Fuller

The following is a summary of the circumstances described by Fuller in

which an apparent crisis apparition of Captain Hinchliffe was experienced by Colonel George L.P. Henderson and related to Squadron Leader Rivers Oldmeadow after Henderson entered his ship's cabin in a state of acute distress (pp 37-38). Fuller states that Henderson's apparitional experience occurred at 2.00am on the morning of Wednesday, 14 March 1928, when Oldmeadow and Henderson, both ex World War One RAF fighter pilots, were asleep in their respective cabins on board the P&O liner *SS Barrabool*, steaming northward through the South Atlantic 'in calm seas somewhere south of the Canary Islands'. The two pilots were returning to England following a six month winter business trip across South Africa, demonstrating biplanes on behalf of the British Avro Aircraft Co. At about 2.00am Oldmeadow's cabin door crashed open and Henderson burst in. A startled Oldmeadow turned on the cabin light to see Henderson in his pyjamas looking horrified and panic stricken. He gasped out: 'God, Rivers, Something ghastly has happened. Hinch has just been in my cabin. Eye patch and all. It was ghastly. He kept repeating over and over again: "Hendy - what am I going to do? What am I going to do? I've got this woman with me and I'm lost. I'm lost." Then he disappeared in front of my eyes! Just disappeared."' (p.37).

None of this made any sense to either of the startled pair. 'Hinch' was Captain Raymond Hinchliffe, a famous ex-RAF pilot who, as far as they knew at that moment, was flying as chief pilot for Imperial Airways, opening up new routes across Europe and the Near East. Oldmeadow poured Henderson 'three fingers of whisky' to calm him down, and he eventually returned to his cabin to settle back to sleep as best he could. According to Fuller, nothing more occurred for the next two days; then on the third day, Saturday, 17 March, the ship's daily news bulletin carried the headline 'CAPTAIN RAYMOND HINCHLIFFE MISSING AFTER TRANS ATLANTIC ATTEMPT', with no information concerning any woman. Who that woman was would soon become public knowledge, and she was someone who had been very much in the public eye.

Henderson's experience of seeing an apparition of Captain Hinchliffe on that particular night only became known following publication of Fuller's book some 51 years later. In his book Fuller reports his chance discovery of a 1961 newspaper letter written by Sqn. Ldr. Rivers Oldmeadow, in which he describes Henderson's experience. Before returning to the possibility of this

being a crisis apparitional experience as presented by Fuller, we need to place it within the context of relevant events in the wider world as they played out during Tuesday and Wednesday, 13 & 14 March, 1928.

The social context

The 1920s was a period of intense competitive adventure, with almost daily news of new speed records being broken on race tracks and flat sands, the introduction of ever newer and faster aircraft competing in speed trials, and pioneering ever longer flights to new destinations. Practically every new aviation exploit received front page reportage. The first west to east transatlantic flight between St John's, Newfoundland and Clifden (in Connemara, Galway, Ireland) was accomplished by pilots John Alcock and Arthur Brown on 15 June 1919, but it was not until September 1927 that the return east-west flight against head winds was successfully accomplished by Captain Raymond Hinchliffe, with American millionaire Charles Levine, who had chartered the flight as passenger. Many daughters from wealthy families were seeking newsworthy fame as daredevil racing drivers and pioneering pilots, and one of them was the Honourable Elsie 'Poppy' Mackay

She was a qualified pilot, a successful silent film actress, a fashion icon, an accomplished horsewoman and a noted interior designer who helped design the interiors of P&O liners on behalf of her father James Lyle Mackay, 1st Earl of Inchcape of Strathnaver (1852-1932), millionaire chairman of the Pacific and Orient (P&O) shipping line. Now aged 34 and very wealthy in her own right, Elsie was determined to be famous as the first woman pilot to fly the Atlantic from England to America. To achieve this ambition she had purchased a six-seater Stinson Detroiter high wing monoplane and had it shipped from Detroit, first to Brooklands airfield and racing track for the required modifications, and then to RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire in final preparation for the attempt. Named the *Endeavour*, it had gold tipped wings, black fuselage and a nine cylinder 300hp (220kW) engine that provided an economical cruising air speed of 84 mph (135 km/h). With a cruising range of only some 700 miles (1126 km) on a full tank of 91 gallons (414L), more than an extra tonne of fuel would be required to ensure

sufficient range to allow for any adverse weather conditions. The flight was expected to take about a day and a half, and the plan was to follow the shortest distance over the Atlantic, known as the 'Great Circle' route (see images online).

Captain Walter Raymond Hinchliffe

Captain Hinchliffe was an ex RAF World War One flying ace who had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). Despite being wounded in the face and losing an eye during an aerial dog fight in June 1918 he had established himself as a pioneering post-war pilot. He was famous for wearing his eye patch, and for opening up new flying routes, first as chief pilot for the Dutch KLM airline and then, from 1924 onwards, as chief pilot for Imperial Airways. While employed by KLM he had met and married Emilie Gallizien, executive secretary for KLM, and they now lived in Purley, Surrey, with their two young children. His successful east to west flight across the Atlantic in 1927 made him a natural choice as co-pilot for Elsie Mackay in achieving her desired pioneering fame. Hinchliffe had initially been very reluctant to accept the challenge, but with the increasing strain of having to judge take-off and landing speeds and distances with only one eye, and the prospect of an early retirement from flying, he agreed after Elsie Mackay guaranteed him the prize money and said that she would insure his life for £10,000 (equivalent to about £580,000 today).

Because her father had expressly forbidden her to undertake such a dangerous attempt, all preparations for the flight were kept secret as she intended to fly while he was away on business in Egypt. When the *Daily Express* heard rumours of their joint attempt it was silenced with threat of legal action, and Elsie Mackay registered for the flight in the name of 'Gordon Sinclair', as co-pilot. Gordon Sinclair was a well known former RAF pilot who was a close friend of Hinchliffe and had agreed to stay with him at the George Hotel, Leadenham, near RAF Cranwell, as if he was to be co-pilot. According to Fuller the subterfuge was successful as it became public news that Hinchliffe, now aged 33, would be attempting the London to New York flight with Sinclair as co-pilot. Sinclair had agreed to go into temporary hiding until news that they had successfully landed in America.

The flight

Despite an unfavourable weather forecast the *Endeavour*, without radio (probably to reduce weight as valve sets with their batteries were heavy), and fully laden with over an extra tonne of fuel, took off from a snow covered runway at RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire on its 3,400 mile transatlantic flight at 08.35am, Tuesday, 13 March, 1928. Elsie Mackay was smuggled on board as pilot with Hinchliffe sitting alongside as co-pilot. A crowd of some 5,000 was expected at Michel Field, Long Island, Newfoundland, in anticipation of Hinchliffe and 'Sinclair's' safe arrival late on Wednesday. At around 13.30pm the chief lighthouse keeper at Mizen Head on the south west coast of Cork, Ireland, reported seeing the distinctive monoplane flying in poor weather on the Great Circle course. The *Roussillon*, a French steamer, later reported seeing them still on course, but after that nothing was ever seen or heard of them again.

The Atlantic air and ship search was called off on Monday, 19 March. In December, some nine months later, a wheel with a serial number that identified it as belonging to the *Endeavour* was washed ashore in Donegal, North West Ireland. It was soon established that during their first night Hinchliffe and Mackay would have encountered violent storm winds with freezing rain and sleet that is likely to have blown them southward off course, and may have damaged and then downed the heavily laden aircraft through icing on the wings. According to Fuller, when the radio operator of the *SS Barrabool* posted up the 17 March maritime alert reporting that Hinchliffe was missing, it was still not public knowledge that Elsie Mackay was flying with him.

Fuller's discovery of Oldmeadow's 1961 letter.

In his end-notes discussing his source material Fuller writes that 'the strange and exotic incident encountered by Squadron Leader Oldmeadow and Colonel Henderson was revealed publicly in a letter to the press over thirty years after the event in 1961.' He then goes on to say 'It was almost startling to find a story like Oldmeadow's buried in a newspaper morgue that was in no way connected with the files and records found in other places.' (pp 309-310). This unexpected discovery by Fuller requires placing within the subject matter of his book.

Fuller had decided to write a book about apparent post-mortem

communications from Captain H. Carmichael Irwin and other officers on the giant, hydrogen filled, R101 airship - which, on its maiden voyage to India in poor weather, had crashed in France on 5 October, 1930, and burst into flames, killing 48 of the 54 people on board. He wanted to investigate the much publicised and much disputed claim that Captain Irwin and fellow officers who had died in the R101 crash had communicated post-mortem information through trance séances held by Eileen Garrett, a well known medium, about fears expressed during its construction and flight trials and details of what had actually caused the crash. These alleged post-mortem communications had commenced two days after the disaster. Records of these séance communications had been kept and later transcribed. This, together with apparent post-mortem communications received from Captain Hinchliffe through Garrett (initially through Beatrice Earl using her Ouija board) to his widow Emilie concerning his doomed flight, and warnings about the forthcoming R101 crash, were the main subjects of Fuller's inquiry. In his Author's Note, Fuller assures the reader that 'all the events in this story are true' as verified by his sources. His account of the preparations for Hinchliffe and Mackay's final flight and details of Colonel Henderson's experience as recounted by Sqn. Ldr. Rivers Oldmeadow opens the book (pp. 17-28 & 35-39).

With his wife Elizabeth as co-researcher, Fuller spent the autumn of 1977 in England, interviewing Emilie Hinchliffe and many of those involved with the R101 disaster. He made copies of the transcripts of Garrett's séances, consulted the records of the College of Psychic Studies, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) and the Harry Price Library, and collated 'some 700 newspaper clippings' from 1930-31 newspaper archives covering the R101 disaster.

During their research Fuller says that he unexpectedly found a 1961 newspaper letter from Rivers Oldmeadow, detailing Henderson's apparitional vision, the ship-borne circumstances in which it had occurred, and their joint decision to keep quiet about it on the grounds that they feared social ridicule if they said that Henderson had seen the ghost of Hinchliffe during the same night that he almost certainly died. Fuller explains their decision by saying that 'Colonel Henderson and Squadron Leader Oldmeadow did the only thing they could do. They kept quiet. It would not be politic to talk about the ghost of a fellow airman. Such things could only be discussed in hushed whispers if

at all. Serious interest in psychic matters was extant but it was confined to a few. The collective mind could never seem to pinpoint exactly what it wanted to believe' (p.39).

Fuller's interpretation of the letter

Fuller states that Henderson's apparitional experience occurred some 18 hours after Hinchliffe and Mackay's plane had taken off. After crossing the 400 miles from Cranwell aerodrome to Mizen Point lighthouse by 1.30pm they would have been some 1000 miles west of Ireland over the Atlantic in the middle of a storm by 2.00am, 14 March. As Henderson was onboard ship he would not have known about Hinchliffe's transatlantic attempt, so there was no apparent reason why he would suddenly see Hinchcliffe's apparition in such great distress. The vision of a desperately worried 'Hinch' with his eye patch, bursting into his cabin 'repeating over and over again: "Hendy-what am I going to do? What am I going to do? I've got this woman with me and I'm lost. I'm lost'" must have been a huge and inexplicable shock. Assuming that the *Endeavour* was still flying through the storm at the time that Hinchliffe's apparition appeared to Henderson, Fuller concludes that Hinchliffe had telepathically transmitted his distress to Henderson in the form of a brief, despairing, apparitional appearance before they crashed into the sea. Henderson and Oldmeadow must have puzzled over it repeatedly and, once they had found out about the crash and who was with him, wondered if Hinchliffe really had somehow telepathically contacted Henderson during his final moments of despair.

Why 'Hendy' not 'Henderson'?

According to how Fuller pictured their relationships, Sqn. Ldr. Rivers Oldmeadow, Col. George Henderson and Captain Raymond Hinchliffe had flown together as World War One fighter pilots, establishing a strong friendship forged in the shared dangers of many aerial dogfights, and this close relationship had continued after the war. This provided a straightforward explanation of why the apparition of Hinchcliffe appeared to Henderson. They knew each other as 'Hinch' and 'Hendy'. Fuller says that 'in these days of pioneer aviation, practically every airman knew every other who flew for the Royal Air Force or in a civil capacity. The bond was very strong. There was great camaraderie amongst them. At the Royal Aero Club

on Piccadilly or the Royal Aeronautical Society near Hyde Park Corner, discussions, dinners, and cocktails created scenes of reminiscences of the past and projections into the future. The old school tie and the silver wing emblems blended together without effort.' (p.37). Fuller also felt that another reason why 'Hendy' experienced the apparition rather than anyone else was that 'Colonel Henderson had a rather strange capacity. It was one he was not very fond of. Several times in the past he had discovered that he could look at a group photograph of an air squadron, a family group, or school activity and immediately point out those still living and those who were dead.' As Fuller does not quote any other source of information about Henderson except Oldmeadow, this detail must have been included in his letter, indicating to Fuller that Henderson possessed psychic sensitivity.

Initial Conclusion based upon Fuller's Account

Based upon Fuller's account of the information contained in Oldmeadow's letter: the names and relationships of those involved, the name of the ship, the reason why they were passengers, and the co-incidence of timing between Henderson's apparitional vision of Hinchliffe (who describes his despair to Hendy in the present tense as if happening now) and Hinchliffe and Mackay's probably desperate circumstances at that same moment, the evidence for Henderson's experience meeting the criteria of being a crisis apparition seems well substantiated beyond reasonable doubt. These are all factual details that Fuller could, and presumably did, check including the date of the ship's bulletin. This confirmed that Henderson's apparitional experience as described by Oldmeadow had occurred three days earlier in the absence of any foreknowledge of Hinchliffe's situation. Fuller's inference, based upon their service ranks, of a strong war-forged relationship between the three of them with 'Hendy' being a close friend of 'Hinch' also seems very reasonable.

All the elements of Fuller's account, from the presumed time and date that Hinchliffe and Mackay died to Henderson experiencing a crisis apparition of Hinchliffe, fit seamlessly together around the time and date of 2.00 am, 14 March, 1928, and offer no reason why the reader should doubt that everything occurred as Fuller describes in his very readable style. On this basis the case seems evidential enough to merit inclusion in any compilation of crisis apparitions presented as offering evidence of direct mind-to-mind

communication across space and time. It was accepted without question by the author Andrew Mackenzie (1980) in his review of Fuller's book for the journal of the SPR.

Part Two: A Further In-depth Inquiry

In order to reach a conclusion as to whether this case is an example of a genuine crisis apparition beyond all reasonable doubt it was necessary to examine the component parts of Fuller's account separately. This involved undertaking a wide range of online inquiries including archival research as to the service records and post-service careers of Hinchliffe, Oldmeadow and Henderson; checking P&O passenger lists and *SS Barrabool* sailing schedules; contacting Fuller's widow Elizabeth and Rivers Oldmeadow's daughter Karin; checking newspaper headlines concerning Hinchliffe and Mackay's doomed flight, and attempting to locate Oldmeadow's 1961 letter to the press.

Mutual Relationships

A major strand of this inquiry was to discover the true state of relationships between Hinchliffe, Henderson and Oldmeadow to see if this would support Fuller's inference of their post WW1 comradeship, with 'Hendy' and 'Hinch' implying that they were close friends. Fuller had assumed that because Oldmeadow had signed his letter describing Henderson's experience as 'Rivers Oldmeadow, Sqn. Ldr. RAF Staff College, Andover' ('Rivers' is a family name and he was known as 'Rivers'), and because Henderson was a Colonel, then they had both served with Captain Hinchliffe in the war and were still in close contact. (The Royal Naval Air force, and Royal Flying Corp used ranks taken from the navy and army before being merged on 1 April 1918, into the Royal Air Force when a new ranking system was introduced.) The result of our online inquiry regarding Henderson and Hinchliffe presents a very different picture, which can be summarised as follows:

- Lieutenant Colonel George Lockhart Piercy Henderson, born 1st April, 1888 in Simla, India, son of Lt. General Sir Edward Henderson. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge (Law). He joined the army as a motorcycle despatch rider in 1914, then transferred to the RNAS, qualifying as a pilot in March, 1915. Promoted to Lt. Col. then Sqn, Ldr. he flew on active service throughout the war, serving in various frontline squadrons. He was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for 'exemplary gallantry' and the Air Force Cross (AFC) for 'conspicuous gallantry'. Discharged from the newly formed RAF in 1919, he was engaged by the Avro Transport Co. (ATC) as a pilot in the Blackpool area, organising aerial displays and taking the public for joyrides in Avro biplane trainers. After the ATC closed in early 1920 he became one of the first pilots to fly for Imperial Airways, but soon left to open the Henderson School of Flying at Brooklands, near Weybridge, Surrey. In October, 1927, accompanied by newly qualified pilot Lewis Rivers Oldmeadow, he undertook a six month tour of South Africa, demonstrating biplanes on behalf of the Avro Aircraft Company, returning with Oldmeadow in the spring of 1928. Later that year he sold his flying school to establish a personal charter flight service. He was killed on 21 July 1930, aged 42, when he and four passengers were thrown out of his charter aircraft when it disintegrated in mid-air over the village of Meopham, near Gravesend, Kent, during his return flight from Le Touquet to Croydon, in what is known as the Meopham air disaster.

- Captain Walter George Raymond Hinchliffe, born 10th June, 1894, Liverpool. An excellent linguist, artist and sportsman, he was educated at Liverpool College before training to become a dentist. In 1912 he joined the army, was promoted to Lieutenant in 1914, and served in the Royal Artillery until 1916. He then transferred to the RNAS, qualifying as a pilot in September, 1916, and was a flying instructor in England until May 1918, when he became a Lieutenant (Honorary Captain) in the newly formed RAF before transfer to France as a frontline pilot. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) after shooting down seven enemy aircraft during dogfights. Shot in the face in June 1918, when he lost an eye as well as his sense of taste and smell, he

was eventually invalided home and transferred onto the RAF unemployed list in August, 1919. Like many other ex RAF pilots he also joined the ATC and captained a team of nine acrobatic display and joyriding biplanes sent to ELTA - Eerste Luchtverker Tentoonstelling Amsterdam (The First Aviation Exhibition Amsterdam) held between August and September 1919, eventually returning to England in January, 1920. After the ATC closed in the spring of 1920 he flew as chief pilot, first for the KLM airline and then for Imperial Airways before leaving on his fatal flight with Elsie Mackay on the 13th March, 1928, aged 33.

Comparison of their extensive WW1 service records demonstrated that they had served in different squadrons in different areas and in different capacities throughout the war, and as far as can be discovered they never met or flew together. After the war, while each joined the ATC during 1919, they were based in separate command areas on either side of the country and their subsequent career paths were completely separate, with Henderson setting up his flying school to train civilian pilots at Brooklands, and Hinchliffe flying for the two major airline companies in between taking private flying contracts as he did with Elsie Mackay.

It difficult to see in what circumstances they might have met and become friends to the extent of being on familiar ‘Hinch’ and ‘Hendy’ terms. As already mentioned, Fuller states that ‘in these days of pioneer aviation, practically every airman knew every other who flew for the Royal Air Force or in a civil capacity’ implying a small, close knit community of fellow pilots like a club, but in reality this inference was not possible. The rapidly expanding social world of civil aviation in the 1920s was completely different. As far as numbers of WW1 pilots are concerned, by the end of the war on 11 November, 1918, some 8000 trainee pilots had died during training, and over 9000 pilots had died in aerial combat, with many more being injured. The RAF had become the largest air force in the world, with over 4000 frontline combat aircraft and over 5000 pilots, plus hundreds of pilot instructors based on dozens of airfields, as well as some 114,000 support personnel divided into 150 squadrons, many from overseas. During 1919 thousands of RAF pilots and pilot instructors were being discharged back into civilian life, with many seeking employment either as airline pilots,

or through setting up their own flying schools, or establishing charter flight services to meet growing public demand.

While it is possible that Hinchliffe and Henderson had met at some time, maybe at the Royal Aero Club or Royal Aeronautical Society, we could find no evidence to support Fuller's assumption, nor is it supported by any of Hinchliffe's apparent post-mortem communications through Eileen Garrett to his widow Emilie. According to Fuller, in Hinchcliffe's post-mortem communications he names many dead pilot friends he has met and talked to, but never once does he mention meeting Henderson following his sudden death on 21 July, 1930. It should be added that Hinchliffe was known publicly as 'Hinch' and Henderson may have been known as 'Hendy', so the use of these terms in Henderson's nightmare may not imply any personal relationship.

- Lewis Rivers Oldmeadow, born 21 August, 1902. Identical twin to Guy who became a naval commander in the Second World War. While attending the then *Shrewsbury Boarding School for Boys* Lewis received a severe injury to his right thigh that necessitated an above knee amputation. This was performed by his father who was a surgeon and general practitioner. Following Shrewsbury he entered Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to study English gaining an MA (Cantab). In late 1923 he joined the wealthy and famous high society Bentley Boys, Brooklands, who raced Bentley racing cars at venues around Britain and Europe. He qualified as a pilot at the Henderson Flying School, Brooklands on 27 September, 1927, aged 25. In October he joined Henderson in his 1927-28 winter tour of South Africa demonstrating Avro biplane trainers, returning in the spring of 1928. After Henderson sold his flying school, Oldmeadow transferred to Stag Lane Aerodrome, Edgware, for about six years as pilot and instructor. In 1934 he joined the RAF, was promoted to squadron leader, and during the war was seconded to the Royal Australian Air Force and mentioned in Dispatches. He was later appointed to the RAF Administrative and Special Duties Branch, Staff College, Andover, and relinquished his commission in late 1960, the same year in which his wife died. On retirement he continued to live in central London and died in March 1974 aged 72.

The SS Barrabool

Launched in 1922 the *SS Barrabool* was one of five P&O liners dedicated to the profitable England to Australia passenger routes, sailing either through the shorter Mediterranean and Suez Canal route or via Cape Town, South Africa. P&O records for 1928 show that the *SS Barrabool* left Hobart, Tasmania, on 5 March, 1928, bound west for South African ports over 6000 nautical miles away, so by 14 March, when Henderson, according to Fuller's reading of Oldmeadow's letter, was supposed to have had his apparitional experience in the south Atlantic 'somewhere south of the Canary Islands', the *SS Barrabool* was actually in the middle of the Indian Ocean. P&O passenger lists show that Henderson and Oldmeadow sailed on the *SS Balranald* from Falmouth to Cape Town, South Africa on 31 October, 1927, and returned to England on the *SS Barrabool*, leaving Cape Town on 8 April, 1928, and arriving back in London on 30 April.

Henderson's Nightmare

If Henderson's apparitional nightmare occurred around 2.00am on 14 March, then it occurred when he and Oldmeadow were still in South Africa, probably in Cape Town demonstrating Avro biplane trainers, including taking the public for joyrides. As this is not the circumstances in which Oldmeadow said that it occurred, namely as passengers onboard the *SS Barrabool*, then Henderson must have had this experience during April, maybe even around 14 April when the ship would have been 'somewhere south of the Canary Islands.' Given this fact, the question is: why did Fuller state with such certainty that Henderson's experience occurred at 2.00 am on 14 March, 1928? And why did he say that the ship's news bulletin reporting Captain Hinchliffe as missing was posted up three days later on 17 March?

The Search for Oldmeadow's Letter

As already mentioned, Fuller's comment that Henderson's experience 'was revealed publicly in a letter to the press over thirty years after the event in 1961', and that 'it was almost startling to find a story like Oldmeadow's buried in a newspaper morgue that was in no way connected with the files and records found in other places' provides little traceable information

beyond the year. In December 1979, following publication of Fuller's book, Rivers Oldmeadow's daughter Karin, who had read the book, wrote to Fuller inquiring about her father's letter which she had never seen. He replied by saying 'I came across his part of the story while rummaging through the files of the Royal Aeronautical Society and newspaper clippings, and was almost stunned in finding how this fitted into the complicated mosaic of the other research.' (Karin, personal communication). Very frustratingly, he did not enclose a copy of her father's letter for her records.

This comment led to the possibility that his letter had either been published in one of the RAC's 1961 journals or in a retained 'newspaper clipping' related to it. Staff at the National Aerospace Library, Farnborough, where the Society's journals are now stored, were unable to confirm journal publication of Oldmeadow's letter or the existence of any related newspaper clippings. According to Karin her father read the *Daily Telegraph* and sometimes the *Daily Express*, but research by Lisa Kenny of the News Reference Team, British Library, in 2017 into their digitised archives found that his letter was not published in either of those papers, nor in *The Times*. The possibility that a copy of the letter was lodged by Mrs M. Goldney, then SPR Secretary, in the SPR's voluminous archives held in Cambridge University, in files relating to Eileen Garrett's and Emily Hinchliffe's séances concerning the R101 and Captain Hinchliffe's apparent post-mortem communications, was also explored, but without success.

In reply to our inquiry concerning the letter, Elizabeth Fuller, John Fuller's widow, said that she had donated all his papers to the Howard Gottlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, where they had been collated into the John G. Fuller Collection. To our surprise and disappointment, given the amount of research material that Fuller said he had amassed that would have included this letter, they replied to our inquiry by saying that they did not possess any archival material related to *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*. Further inquiry as to whether Mrs Fuller could remember when, and where, her husband found the letter that might provide us with a clue as to where to search, elicited no reply.

It seems unlikely that Oldmeadow would have suddenly decided to write to whichever newspaper published his letter some thirty three years after Henderson's experience, unless he was responding to some newspaper article or book review concerning the mystery of Hinchcliffe's and Elsie

Mackay's fatal flight, or which cited Hinchliffe's communication with Emilie, his widow, through seances held by Eileen Garrett soon after his death.

Fuller says in his letter to Karin that 'the brief letter in the press that I had to go on was, of course, not very expansive.' As her father's letter provides the only account of Henderson's experience it is difficult to understand why Fuller did not include a copy of the letter, and why, given its central importance, it was not quoted in full in his book. Without Oldmeadow's account to hand we can only speculate as to what he may have written. We know that he would not have said that Henderson's experience occurred on 14 March as they were still in South Africa, not onboard the *SS Barrabool* which was then still in the Indian ocean. As they left Cape Town on 8 April it must have occurred sometime during April. What Oldmeadow might have said is that when they were returning to England on the *SS Barrabool* 'in the spring of 1928' Henderson had burst into his cabin saying, 'God, Rivers, something ghastly has happened. Hinch has just been in my cabin. Eye patch and all. It was ghastly. He kept repeating over and over again: "Hendy- what am I going to do? What am I going to do? I've got this woman with me and I'm lost. I'm lost". Then he disappeared in front of my eyes! Just disappeared.'

Fuller, not unreasonably, assumed from the present tense of 'Hinch's' frantic message to 'Hendy' that it must have been a crisis apparition. This dated it to 14 March and around 2.00am, when he burst into Oldmeadow's cabin. As a crisis apparition, that must have been about the time Hinchliffe and Mackey crashed into the sea and drowned. Based upon the assumption that 'Hinch's' use of the present tense gave an exact date, Fuller assumed they had booked a return ticket from Cape Town for early March 1928 and then calculated, or Oldmeadow had mentioned, that the *SS Barrabool* would have been 'somewhere south of the Canary islands' when Henderson's apparitional experience occurred.

Fuller would have been able to discover that on 17 March there was a maritime alert notifying all ships 'CAPTAIN RAYMOND HINCHLIFFE MISSING AFTER TRANSATLANTIC ATTEMPT'. This bulletin would have been received by the *SS Barrabool* and posted on the notice board. Fuller took this as further confirmation that Henderson could not have known of the doomed transatlantic attempt until three days after his apparitional experience.

In reality, as Henderson and Oldmeadow did not leave Cape Town until 8 April, they would have been fully aware of the tragedy and all the intense speculation as to what had happened. Maybe, after dinner, he and Oldmeadow had been trying to imagine what it must have been like aboard the doomed *Endeavour*, and Captain Hinchliffe's intense feelings of responsibility for Elsie Mackay during their final hours. Maybe, while still full of these thoughts, Henderson had retired to sleep, woken up in the grip of this nightmare of Hinchliffe in despair, and hurried to Oldmeadow's cabin to tell him what he had seen and what Hinchliffe had said. Maybe he and Henderson, who had had some experience of the paranormal, wondered whether Hinchliffe's present tense indicated that Henderson had telepathically tuned into what Hinchliffe had been experiencing in those final moments.

What, however, remains completely puzzling is how Fuller came across this 1961 letter 'buried in a newspaper morgue that was in no way connected with the files and records found in other places' when he and Elizabeth were searching early 1930s newspapers individually by hand, or on microfiche, concerning the R101 airship disaster and claimed post-mortem communications. This would have been a very wearisome procedure, involving scanning through hundreds of newspaper issues one by one. Finding a letter in a newspaper is not easy to do, even when you know it exists. Yet, assuming 10 letters per issue, so some 3,640 letters per year, Fuller somehow came across it even although he did not know it existed. Equally puzzling is why he was searching through 1961 newspapers letters at all as this was not an anniversary year, either of the 1928 Hinchliffe and Mackay tragedy, or the 1930 R101 disaster.

The mystery is that despite knowing the year, the subject matter, the names, and the newspapers that Rivers Oldmeadow read, plus *The Times*, it could not be found in the first 2017 digital archival search. With this chapter in mind I asked Lisa Kenny if she would kindly carry out a second search, as many more newspapers have now digitised their archives. Oldmeadow must have been responding to something, maybe reference to Hinchliffe and Mackay's fatal disaster, so this was taken into account as well. But despite using all the facilities of digital archiving the letter cannot be found. If it was not been published in the national newspapers it might have been published in one of central London's local papers of the time that has not, as yet, been

digitally archived, as Oldmeadow lived in central London. That Oldmeadow had the experience as described by Fuller is confirmed by Karin who, in response to a recent inquiry, has said that 'I remember him telling me about it when I was a child and being fascinated. He was a very meticulous man and found the episode impossible to explain but somehow accepted it.'

14 March 1928: the state of public knowledge.

Contrary to what Fuller states, from 14 March onwards newspapers across the world were well aware that the Honourable Elsie Mackay, not Sinclair, had flown with Captain Hinchliffe. A *Daily Express* reporter had photographed them as they boarded the *Endeavour* on 13 March and the *St. Petersburg Times* received teleprinter news of their flight at 1.30am 14 March. On the same day the *Glasgow Herald* broke the story with the headline: 'Big Flight Sensation – British Aviator Sets Out to Fly the Atlantic – Scottish Peer's daughter as passenger? – Aeroplane sighted by ships at sea.' In Cape Town the *Cape Argus* headline said in large capitals 'British attempt to fly the Atlantic – Captain Hinchliffe's journey from east to west – Peer's daughter as his passenger – Chances said to be ten to one against success.' The ongoing search, rumours and speculation remained worldwide news for weeks.

On that same day the *Cape Argus* carried the first of several interviews with Henderson about his plans to establish a new bi-weekly charter flight service from the Rand area, Johannesburg, to the Cape starting in November, 1928, but Henderson never makes reference to the breaking news on *Endeavour*. Despite all the headline speculation he never once mentions the tragedy during subsequent interviews, which seems to imply that he did not know Captain Hinchliffe except by public reputation. In his final interview on 26 March he announced that he would be leaving Cape Town on the *SS Barrabool* on 8 April.

The outcome of this second inquiry was completely unexpected. There was no apparent reason to doubt Fuller's account, as all the details dovetail neatly together. He based his 14 March date upon a not unreasonable assumption that the present tense of Hinchliffe's comments to Henderson fixed the date, so it was definitely a crisis apparition. As Oldmeadow said they were passengers on the *SS Barrabool* there was no apparent reason to check P&0 sailing schedules.

Final conclusion

As Henderson's nightmare experience definitely occurred sometime during April, 1928 it does not meet the definition of a crisis apparition and should not be quoted as such.

We must emphasise that our conclusion applies to this particular incident as recounted in Fuller's book. It does not imply that Fuller's account and interpretation of transcripts concerning Beatrice Earl's or Eileen Garrett's apparent post-mortem communications from Captain Hinchliffe, or apparent post-mortem communications through Eileen Garrett from Captain Irwin and other officers following the R101 disaster, are not in accordance with the known facts, as the transcripts exist, have been transcribed, and are as quoted in his book (see Jarman 1980, and Hume, 2015, for discussion of these transcripts).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank: Dr Tom Ruffles for reading an early draft and providing information from the *London Gazette* concerning Sqn. Ldr. Rivers Oldmeadow's service career; Mark A. Samuels, who kindly provided us with further information concerning Rivers Oldmeadow and contacted Karin's son Kaj on our behalf; Kaj for contacting his mother Karin Woodford, who kindly supplied photographs and searched her collection of her father's notebooks and papers without success; Elizabeth Fuller for informing us that she no longer possessed the relevant archival material; the Hermann Gottlieb Archival Reference Center for checking the John G Fuller collection; and Lisa Kenny of the News Reference Team, British Library, who has twice kindly searched the digital newspaper archives on our behalf.

Originally published: *JSPR. 82*, 28-42. (Jan. 2018) as 'The Case of Colonel Henderson and the Apparition of Captain Hinchliffe re-visited: Was it a Crisis Apparition? (co-authored with Steve Hume).

References

uller, J, G. (1979). *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*. London. Souvenir Press.
lume, S. (2015). *The R101 Séances in the Light of the once-secret Jarman Report.* Part 2. *Light.* Vol.136.No1: 5-17. London. College of Psychic Studies.
rwin, H.J. (2004). *An Introduction to Parapsychology*. 4th ed. Jefferson. NC. MacFarland & Co.
arman, A. (1980). 'The R101 rises again' - *Alpha* - No 6 - Jan-Feb 1980, pp.12-25.
eShan, L. (2009). *The New Science of the Paranormal.* Wheaton. Ill. Quest Books.
lackenzie, A. (1980). The Airmen Who Would Not Die. Book review. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol 50:314-16.
Vikipedia. 'Elsie Mackay'(retrieved 12/7/16)
)nline discussion: http://croydonairportcalling.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/captain-raymond-hinchliffe-and-seances.html (retrieved September 21, 2017).
:vidential Reports ASCS – www.asci.org/ASCS/Library/EvidenceRoom/Evidential (Retrieved 21/9/2017).
lysterial – The Paranormal Community – mysterial.org.uk/cgi-bin/index.cgi?action=viewnews&id=940 (Retrieved 21/9/2017).

CHAPTER NINE

Gail's Dream: In which she sees the person her husband saw that same afternoon

In his 1896 Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research, the American psychologist and philosopher William James (1842-1910) said: 'if you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you mustn't seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white'. For the sake of argument, let us take the 'law that all crows are black' as representing the orthodox position of the neurosciences and mainstream psychology, that brains and minds can only acquire new information through their senses. If no new sensory stimulation occurs, then no new information is received by the brain and passed on to the conscious mind. Each of our senses has areas of the brain dedicated to receiving and analysing new information, and these areas, in turn, are connected to each other to integrate new information into a co-ordinated whole. According to this view, claims that anyone has ever received 'white crow' information that has somehow bypassed the sensory systems and has been received directly by the mind, as in telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition, must be in error because that just cannot happen. There will always be an 'all crows are black' explanation because that is the only possible explanation. The question is whether, despite the black crow argument, the following experience has a more likely 'white crow' explanation.

Gail's Dream

In her own words in her letter to me:

> 'the following experience occurred in 1994. I had not experienced anything like this before nor have I since. I had had a miscarriage which was very upsetting for me and my husband. To add insult to injury, on my return from hospital I succumbed to a nasty bout of flu. I felt very ill and was unable to get out of bed. Tony, my husband who is

a physiotherapy lecturer, had taken time off work to look after me but had an important meeting at the local private hospital which would have been difficult to rearrange. I reassured him that I wanted to sleep and thought that he should go ahead with the meeting as planned. After Tony had left I immediately fell sleep. During this sleep I had a very vivid dream. I dreamed about someone I knew in my professional capacity as a physiotherapist. This person was also a physiotherapist but I had never worked alongside her and our paths had rarely crossed. I had heard several months previously that she was undergoing treatment for breast cancer, but as far as I knew she was responding well to treatment. In my dream I saw her clearly and was shocked by what I saw. Tony, who also knew this lady, returned from his meeting and I woke up as he came into the bedroom. He looked very upset and said "You won't believe who I have just seen in hospital." Before he could say anything more I replied with absolute certainty, "You saw ER, She was sitting in a wheelchair, she was skeletally thin and had to wear a neck collar because she was unable to hold her head up." The look on Tony's face was one of shock and incredulity as that is exactly what he had seen. I must make it clear that we had not spoken about this lady and neither of us knew she was in the private hospital. The image I had of ER in my dream was so vivid, and the moment of realisation between Tony and myself that we had seen the same scene as in my dream was so bizarre and unlike anything that either of us had ever experienced before or since, that I can recall it today as if it was yesterday.'

Personal Note

Gail's experience has been chosen for discussion because, as a fellow retired physiotherapy lecturer, I know both Gail and Tony, and knew ER before her retirement on health grounds. It is new to the literature so has no history of previous interpretation. ER worked in a psychiatric hospital and I knew her because I visited our physiotherapy students during their clinical placement in her department. Gail and Tony had kept this strange experience to themselves, and it was only after I mentioned to her that I had written some articles on telepathy that she told me the story. I asked Gail to write a description of her experience, which was then checked and agreed by Tony as

an accurate account of what he had seen when he had unexpectedly met ER, and correct in describing the sequence of verbal exchange between them following his return home.

It should be emphasised that ER worked in a different hospital from Gail, who worked in the outpatient physiotherapy department of the main NHS hospital, so their clinical paths never met. Gail, like Tony, knew ER by sight mainly through attendance at branch lectures. All she knew about ER at the time of her dream was that she had received apparently successful treatment for cancer. This news was many months old, and as ER had been receiving NHS hospital treatment there was no reason that Tony, who was on a visit to the physiotherapy department of a large private hospital to see students during their clinical placement there, would have expected to see ER. It is worth emphasising that Gail has never had such a dream before or since. We need to examine what occurred step by step.

Sensory acquired new information (black crow)

This was acquired by Tony, who unexpectedly saw and spoke to ER, who was sitting in a wheelchair by the nurse's station, looking skeletally thin and wearing a neck collar because she was too weak to hold her head up. This new visual information concerning the physical state of ER was accompanied by an acute sense of shock and distress at the terminal implications for her. This distressing image was now firmly in Tony's mind, together with the thought that he would tell Gail who he had seen, and in what state he had seen her, when he returned home.

Non-sensory acquired information (white crow)

This visual scene was unexpectedly experienced by Gail during a dream consisting of a vivid sequence of distressing and very specific images concerning ER. This new information concerning the appearance and state of health of ER was confirmed by the conversational sequence that followed after Tony entered the bedroom:

1. Tony, on entering the bedroom and looking upset: 'You won't believe who I have just seen in hospital.'
2. Gail, replying with 'absolute certainty' before Tony could say who he had seen: 'You saw ER. She was sitting in a wheelchair, she was

skeletally thin and had to wear a neck collar because she was unable to hold her head up'.

3. Tony, after staring at Gail with a sense of complete 'shock and incredulity' while she described her dream, confirmed that the details she had seen in her vivid dream matched the details he had seen when he saw ER in the hospital.

It should be added here, as Gail forgot to include these details in her original account that has been quoted unchanged, that in her dream Gail saw that ER's hair was now white, that she was wearing a soft white neck collar, and she was situated alongside the nurse's service station. These details were also confirmed by Tony. We now need to see what each of these diametrically opposed positions can offer as a working hypothesis on which to base an explanation for Gail's experience.

A 'Black Crow' explanation

Assuming that Gail's description of what she saw in her vivid dream, and Tony's confirmation of her description of what he saw concerning ER, are both accurate accounts of the circumstances in which they occurred, then as Gail's visual system was not activated by any external stimuli, the visual elements of her dream must have been internally activated, so the only possible explanation is one of chance co-incidence: two sets of closely matched visual imagery concerning ER happened to occur in two spatially separated minds on the same afternoon, possibly at about the same time. One set was generated through Tony's visual system and the other set was generated in Gail's mind by chance dream imagery. The statistical improbability of this joint occurrence of two sets of matching visual imagery in two separate minds may be impossible to compute, but that it occurred has demonstrated that it could occur by chance co-incidence.

This conclusion rests on the working hypothesis of the neurosciences and mainstream psychology that 'mind' is not an entity separate from the brain. In operational terms the term 'mind' should be taken as a noun referring to ongoing brain-generated mental processes at all levels, including emotions and consciousness, instead of the more usual meaning of 'mind' as a self-existent entity separate from the brain, as in the 'brain and mind' theory of dualism.

As mentioned in the Introduction, in the title of his 2015 book *The Brain: The Story of You* and in the following quotation, the American neuroscientist David Eagleman summarises the mind-is-the-brain hypothesis by saying, ‘our thoughts and our dreams, our memories and experiences all arise from this same neural material. Who we are is found within its intricate firing patterns of electrochemical impulses. When that activity stops, so do you. When that activity changes you change character in lockstep.’ The apparently complete difference between emotions of anger or despair and the intense bioelectrical brain activity taking place in the subcortical amygdala nuclei and other areas of the brain at the same time are, according to this theory, different expressions of the same kind. You, and the electrochemical firing patterns of neural activity generated by your brain, are of one and the same nature.

Not everyone accepts this interpretation, or any other brain-is-mind hypothesis as a possible explanation, because the difference in properties between physical brain activity and non-physical *mental* activity, seems too absolute. One set of properties is instrumentally detectable, quantifiable and objective by nature, and the other set of properties is not instrumentally detectable, not quantifiable and remains subjective by nature. The difference between the measurable 'quanta' of brain activity and the non-measureable ‘*qualia*’ of *mind* activity seems to be a real difference in kind, not degree, so there must be some other explanation. This apparently irreconcilable difference in kind is why the ‘hard problem’ of consciousness as defined by the philosopher David Chalmers (see 1995; 1996 references) remains unresolved. This leads us to:

A ‘White Crow’ explanation

The basis for a ‘white crow’ explanation is that the *qualia* of *conscious experiencing* is different in kind, not degree, to the bioelectrical activity of the brain. This is not to deny correlation of brain activity and *mental activity* as confirmed by neuroscientific findings but, as pointed out previously, correlation, of itself, is not an explanation. The working hypothesis is that the *emergent qualia of mind* possess new properties not possessed by the localised, physical, properties of the brain. Personal experiences, such as Gail’s Dream, indicate that these new *qualial* properties of mind must include the possibility of direct mental communication between minds as in

telepathy. Gail's experience was an acquisition of new mental information concerning ER that she could not have possibly acquired by normal sensory means. Communication, as in this case of telepathic communication, is more likely to occur between those who have strong emotional relationships, than with strangers, as discussed in Guy Playfair's book *Twin Telepathy* (2012).

Discussion

We seem left with a choice between two mutually exclusive answers, based upon mutually exclusive working hypotheses concerning Gail's dream: a 'black crow' working hypothesis in which brain and mind are of one physical nature and cannot receive any new information except through its sensory systems, or an alternative 'white crow' brain/*mind* hypothesis, in which emergent *qualia* of *mental experiencing* allow for new properties, including direct *mind* to *mind* communication between individual minds. For all practical purposes our everyday self exists within the 'hereness and nowness' of 'black crow' sensory input in which we are separate individuals and can communicate with each other through our senses only. But Gail's Dream demonstrates the possibility of telepathic communication between minds beyond reasonable doubt.

Conclusion

If this is the correct interpretation, then, as in William James's analogy, the 'all crows are black' philosophy of mind-is-brain neural monism is overstating its case. Gail's Dream was a 'white crow' acquisition of information concerning ER as confirmed by Tony. If Tony had not seen ER with all the emotional shock that this entailed, Gail's dreaming would not have presented that same sequence of vivid and distressing imagery concerning ER. Given the circumstances it is difficult not to conclude that there was a causal *mental* connection between the two sets of matched experiences.

Originally published: *JSPR 82*, 163-168 (July, 2018) as 'Gail's Dream: Was it an 'All Black Crow' or a single 'White Crow' Experience?

References

Chalmers, D, J. (1995) Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), 200-219.

Chalmers, D. J. (1996) *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eagleman, D. (2015). *The Brain: The Story of You*. New York: Pantheon Books.

James, W. (1896). *Address by the President*. Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 12, 2-10.

Playfair, G. L. (2012). *Twin Telepathy* (3rd Ed). Guildford: White Crow Books.

CHAPTER TEN

‘Thoughts Through Space’: The Wilkins and Sherman Long Range Telepathy Experiment from the Arctic to New York

The experiment described in this chapter is probably the most astonishing and successful test of telepathic communication ever recorded. The difference between this experiment and the more usual telepathic experience is that it comprised a series of thrice weekly, telepathically received images over a five month period. During that time, diary accounts from each of the two participants were kept, checked, and vouched for by external observers, including Dr Gardner Murphy, Department of Psychology, Harvard. For those of a post WW2 generation the questions are likely to be: who were Wilkins and Sherman? what was the experiment? why did they undertake this mammoth task? and what was the result?

Sir Hubert Wilkins

Sir Hubert Wilkins (1888 – 1958) was an adventurous Australian who enlisted with the Australian Flying Corps in World War I, seeing action on the western battle fronts both in aerial combat and on the ground. In 1918 he was awarded the MC & Bar for rescuing wounded American soldiers in the Battle of the Hindenburg Line. Lieutenant General Sir John Monash, who commanded the Australian forces, said that Wilkins was the bravest man he had ever met. A pioneer of aerial exploration, with a talent for aerial photography and cinematography, Wilkins led a series of Arctic and Antarctic expeditions during the 1920s and 1930s. In a 20 hour flight over the Arctic in 1928 he proved against all scientific expectation at the time that there was no land mass under the Arctic ice as there is under the Antarctic ice, and received a knighthood for this discovery. In 1931 he undertook the first submarine exploration under the Arctic sea ice. During the interwar years his exploits were front page news and his expertise was recognised worldwide.

In early 1937 the first two flights of some 4,000 miles over the North Pole using planes with long range fuel tanks were made from Russia to Alaska. In August a third transpolar flight from Moscow was attempted,

using a conventional plane with six crew and cargo, which was to land at Fairbanks, Alaska, for refuelling. A partial radio message was received from the plane, saying they were losing height, and rough coordinates indicated they had probably landed somewhere on the Alaskan side of the North Pole. There was no further communication. Through its Embassy in Washington the Russian government asked Wilkins if he would undertake an extended search for possible survivors. A first flight in late August covering thousands of miles found nothing, but the Russian government asked Wilkins if he would carry out a second search over winter with full financing. After extensive preparations this second search, which provided the circumstances for this experiment, covered the period from the 25th October, 1937 to 17th March, 1938.

Harold Sherman

Harold Sherman (1898–1987) graduated from Michigan University and became a successful American novelist, playwright, reporter and radio commentator. He lived in Arkansas, had a studio apartment in New York as he was a reporter for the *New York Times*, and was a successful playwright, as well as a member of the City Club, New York, where he and Wilkins had met socially in the early 1930s. While Wilkins was engaged in preparations for the second search they met again at the City Club, and Wilkins discussed his plans, including his decision to use a new, twin-engined, long range, aeroplane.

During general discussion they found that they had a shared interest in telepathy. Wilkins' interest came from close contact with Australian aborigines, who would tell him in a matter of fact way of far off events, such as births, death, accidents or other family problems which were only confirmed conventionally days or weeks later; and Sherman's interest came through a series of personal telepathic experiences as he was growing up. From the age of eight onwards he 'just knew', despite family disbelief, who would unexpectedly visit the family, or who was ill or in danger. He and his brother practiced telepathy, and he knew when his brother had been killed by a horse falling on him before the accident was discovered. Sherman found that he was successful both as a psychic and as a clairvoyant. In cooperation with the psychology department at the University of California, Sherman investigated the conditions that favoured successful telepathic and clairvoyant

reception and wrote many books on ESP.

The experiment

Sherman, living in New York, suggested an interesting experiment whilst Wilkins was in Alaska conducting a second search over the Arctic ice for the Russian aeroplane. Sherman proposed that he would try to contact Sir Wilkins' mind telepathically three times a week between 11.30pm to midnight, Eastern Standard Time, throughout the search period, and note down any mental impressions he received. Wilkins, when possible, would try and communicate his thoughts and circumstances to Sherman. Wilkins would keep a daily diary, with Sherman sending copies of his dated impressions to Wilkins, and Wilkins returning a dated copy of his diary over the same period for objective cross-checking. The two records would then be sent to Dr Gardner Murphy, Harvard University.

Separated by some 3,000 – 4,000 miles with unusually hostile weather conditions, these packages were often received and returned weeks apart. During the late autumn and winter of 1937 into 1938, huge solar flares caused appalling radio conditions in the upper atmosphere, with garbled static and sudden fade outs as violent magnetic storms triggered wild fluctuations of the earth's magnetic field. Radio contact was so bad during the five month period that Reginald Iversen, chief radio operator for the *New York Times* who was covering the Arctic search, only managed to contact Wilkins thirteen times for short periods before the signal broke up.

During this five month search period Sherman, situated in New York, had no idea what was happening with the expedition on the northern and very isolated coast of Alaska and flights out over the vast Arctic wastes of snow and ice. The normal autumnal falls of snow and formation of Arctic sea ice were delayed, with storms and fog creating considerable difficulties in setting up base camps, radio communication masts, provisions, and search schedules. Wilkins' intention was to search by clear moonlight, with flights lasting up to 15 to 20 hours, covering thousands of square miles in each sweep. Sherman had no personal knowledge of aircraft at all, nor how such a search would be organised. He had never visited Canada or Alaska, and made no attempt to acquire such knowledge as he did not want his mental 'impressions' as he called them to be influenced by conscious rationalisation of what might be happening.

The telepathic test series

Test 1 commenced on 25 October 1937, with Sherman in his New York study in semi-darkness with notebook to hand. 'I awaited impressions, either in the form of mental images or strong feelings or flashes which could be translated as having a certain meaning. The following is an exact transcription of what seemed to "come through" as put down by me at the time and contained in my notebook."'

SHERMAN	WILKINS
Equipment not ready	*Wireless equipment not ready*
Latitude 52	*Latitude 55*
Longitude 99	*Longitude 99*
Delay impression	
One man short for expedition	*Another wireless man will have to be hired*
Delay impression again	
On to Aklavik Wednesday	*On to New York Wednesday to*
Equipment not complete	*complete equipment which means delay*
Delay	
You are in company of heavy-set man or he nearby – impression, as you would say 'Wilkins signing off'	*At dinner given by Manitoba League of Aviators, two heavy set men sat one on either side. My address was given on radio – first half hour to all Canada, second half hour to Winnipeg local stations only. The 'continental' man did actually say 'Wilkins now signing off'*
Seem to see you get up and leave a room – and go out and join three	*After dinner I invited three men to my room. Shortly after, Kenyon*

men – yes, there are more than three – quite a group.	*came in with about fifteen other men.*
You have had a hard time keeping this appointment – your mind full of plans and delay – something mechanical hasn't arrived or isn't satisfactory	*Didn't want to keep this dinner appointment. Tried to get out of it to go to Ottawa Tuesday (today) instead of tomorrow. Thought that if I did not get to Montreal or Ottawa as soon as possible, our plans would be delayed.*

On the apparent Aklavik/New York discrepancy see later comment.

In Test 2, 26 October, Sherman says, '*Work begins on skis'* (for aircraft), '*You seem to be in building with steps leading up to door'* and *'K testing skis – are they strong enough to support plane? This is an important question'*. Work had commenced that day on fitting the skis by the co-pilot Kenyon. They were designed for 10,000 lb, not a possible 13-15,000 lb as required. Wilkins had been very impressed with the imposing flight of steps leading up to the entrance of the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, where he was staying.

For a total of over 68 tests, with an average of 7 separate impressions per test, (around 400 individual impressions), Sherman maintained an incredible rate of correct hits. Examples included when Wilkins had toothache; had a cold; damage to the tailplane on landing; damage to tip of propeller causing engine problems; delay in fitting a new engine; problems with propeller synchronisation rates; an Eskimo hut accidentally catching fire at night as he (Sherman) could see the flames; problem of buying long poles for new tent; accurate descriptions of scenery during particular flights; worry over poor de-icing of plane windows; staying on 4th floor of a hotel (Wilkins 'My room in hotel 4th floor – 413'); delay problems with supply plane, and when and why flights were aborted.

On one occasion Sherman received a clear impression of Wilkins being in the company of men in military attire, with ladies in evening dress, and Wilkins himself in evening dress. He was very surprised at this impression as

he knew Wilkins had no evening dress with him. Wilkins' diary for that evening read 'Armistice Ball at Regina. Army officers and police in uniform. Had tea with Lieutenant Governor of the province. My appearance at this affair was made possible by the loan to me of evening dress'.

But perhaps the single, most surprising, of all Sherman's impressions, because it seemed so completely out of context, occurred during Test 17, 39 November, as follows:

SHERMAN	WILKINS
Strong impression ping pong balls Sudden flash of ping pong – is there a table in town where people play. Can't account for this unusual impression	*Two of the men, Cheesman and Dyne, were playing ping pong in the school gymnasium but I was not there.*

In this same test Sherman recorded '*Latitude 68/Longitude 133*', Wilkins 'Latitude 68/Longitude 135', and mentioned '*Star reckoning – I see you looking at the sky – thinking about several flight courses*'. Wilkins 'was taking observations of Pole Star to fix true north for radio beacon'. Sherman later received a strong impression that the Russian crew were dead, with the plane overturned some 200 miles on the Alaskan side of the North Pole, but neither the aircraft nor their bodies were ever found.

Sherman and Wilkins' book *Thoughts Through Space* was published in 1942, and although it attracted some media attention it was soon forgotten in the sweep of dramatic events of World War Two. Reissued in 1951, it was again soon out of print. Then in 1970, when the late Ingo Swann, artist, author and psychic, was browsing round the basement of Weiser's bookstore, New York, he happened to see a 2nd hand copy. Swann was deeply impressed by their account and in 1972, while doing a series of successful remote viewing studies for the American Society for Psychical Research in New York, he met Harold Sherman and was able to discover more about how this remarkable feat of communication was achieved. In 2004, with a new Foreword by Swann, the book was reissued as one of a series in the *Studies in Consciousness/Russell Targ Editions* of landmark studies in parapsychology and consciousness, published by Hampton Roads Publishing Company in

association with Russell Targ.

Contents

The contents are as follows: *Forewords* by Ingo Swann and Harold Sherman. Part One – *My Story as Sender* by Wilkins; Part Two – *My Story as Receiver* by Sherman; Part Three - *Authenticated Documentary Record of the Wilkins-Sherman Experiments in Long Distance Telepathy*. This record also includes relevant correspondence concerning particular events. Parts One and Two are particularly important in that they set the documentary record in Part Three into the personal and social context of both men as they lived through these five months. Sherman would relax and empty his mind of all everyday thoughts, imagining an internal blank white screen in a dark surround, then in semi darkness he would note down his internal impressions as they came to him. He often felt as if he was present in Wilkins' thoughts and related emotions, which sometimes led to errors of sensing Wilkins' actual location, as in his 25 October impression of 'on to *Aklavik Wednesday*', when Wilkins was actually going to New York on that Wednesday, regarding the latest radio directional equipment. The point here is that during this trip to New York Wilkins was visualising how he would set up the equipment at Aklavik, a small, isolated settlement near the north coast of Alaska.

They also carried out a series of 25 pack Zener card ESP runs (Figure 1) which are included in the book. (These cards were designed by psychologist Karl Zener in the 1930s, for clairvoyant tests as to which card symbol had been turned over).

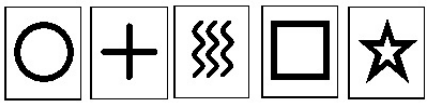


Figure 1. Zener cards

Some runs were very successful, but both agreed that they were deadly boring to do. Sherman, who felt that strong emotional imagery was the major factor in his successful telepathic rapport with Wilkins, makes the wry comment that if such an uninteresting and incredibly boring procedure actually demonstrates ESP. it carries more evidential weight for its existence than his emotionally charged impressions.

During this five month period Sherman became highly stressed through

the demands of various book, article, and radio commentator deadlines, which provided his income on the one hand, and his sense of responsibility to undertake his three times weekly telepathic commitment with all the writing up and deposition of each account involved on the other, and suffered acute digestive distress, including a stomach ulcer. In his final letter to Dr Gardner Murphy of 4 April 1938, he expressed profound relief on completion of the experiment. His health slowly returned over the following months.

Discussion

The importance of this sustained sequence of telepathic impressions lies in its wealth of data and context, now available for modern analysis. Initial analysis indicated a 70% hit rate for precise impressions and higher if very close descriptions are included. Sherman details his procedure to enter into the state of mind conducive to telepathic impressions. He needed to enter into a quiet, receptive state of mind, think about Wilkins and note down mental images as they came into his mind. He makes the salient point that personal belief in the existence of telepathy is an important element, as personal doubt as to your ability to achieve telepathic communication is a strong inhibitor likely to override and mask any latent ability.

All personal experiences are prone to errors of recall and interpretation. Nevertheless, even sceptical psychologists accept them as reasonably trustworthy accounts if they fall within the range of experiences readily accounted for by everyday social experience, or explainable within the context of unusual circumstances. Where an experience, such as an instance of apparent telepathy, falls outside any such explanatory frameworks, even when recounted by an eminently sane person willing to risk public ridicule, it is likely to be rated by the scientific community as falling into the bottom end of any scale of credibility despite support from verifiable evidence. Any non telepathic explanation, however unlikely, will be considered as less unlikely than telepathy. The difference in this case is that this experiment fulfilled experimental criteria, as Sherman’s sustained sequence of telepathic impressions over that five month period is matched by Wilkins' daily diary of events, with each account checked by outside observers. The cumulative rate of some 70% successful ‘hits’ seems in excess of any explanation invoking chance coincidence.

Despite this, Wikipedia’s entry for Harold Sherman (retrieved 8

November, 2021) quotes John Booth, an American magician with no belief in the possibility of telepathy, who claimed that the 'hits' could be explained by 'coincidence, law of averages, subconscious expectations, logical inference or a plain lucky guess' (*Psychic Paradoxes* (1986), p.69). Quite how these non-telepathic explanations would have resulted in so many specific hits corresponding to their occurrence on the same day, such as the ping pong game, is not explained. One wonders how successful Booth's guesswork would have been over the same period.

Wikipedia also quotes a review of their book by the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* that cast doubt on their experiment by saying that 'as the study was published five years after it was conducted, it arouses suspicion on the validity of the conclusions.' It was actually four years, and this is a completely unreasonable ground for dismissal, casting unwarranted doubt on their integrity. During that four year period both authors had independently busy careers. While Sherman was in New York, Wilkins was carrying out further explorations in Antarctica. Gardner Murphy and colleagues had to collate, compare, and analyse the two sets of diary observations for Part Three: Authenticated Documentary Record. Both authors had to write their chapters for Parts One and Two, convert the findings into book form and agree proofs prior to publication in 1942, by which time America was at war.

The only non-telepathic explanation left to the dedicated sceptic would seem to be one of sustained collusion between Sherman, Wilkins, Dr Gardner Murphy and his academic colleagues. Such an explanation would be at complete odds with the fact that when their diaries were exchanged they were 3,000-4,000 miles apart in totally different circumstances, as well as being completely at odds with the known characters of all concerned. In philosophy the principle known as 'Occam's Razor' (attributed to Franciscan friar and scholastic philosopher William of Ockham, c. 1287-1347)) argues that the simplest explanation is most likely to be the best one. Here, Occam's Razor would seem to shave the range of possible explanations down to the simplest one, which is that Sherman was in frequent telepathic communication with Wilkins during that five month period.

Why the scepticism?

Why are claims of telepathy, defined here as direct mind to mind communication across space unmediated by the sensory systems of the

persons concerned, such complete anathema to scientific thinking? The reason why such claims rate low on the scientific credibility scale is that we have no testable hypothesis to account for such anomalous communication. In fact, present knowledge of the apparent total dependence of identifiable mental functions, including states of consciousness, upon areas of correlated brain function seems to preclude any such communication. None of the known neural mechanisms include the possibility of one brain, or brain-generated mind, communicating directly across space with another brain or mind. In our present state of neuro-psychological knowledge it cannot happen, therefore it does not happen.

But well-substantiated anecdotal accounts, including this extended account, indicate that telepathy does happen, and painstaking laboratory research provides an increasing measure of support for this claim (see Vernon, 2021). Statistical analysis of individual trial outcomes, together with meta-analyses of many studies, has demonstrated successful results well beyond chance expectation. Telepathy does happen, so wishing it away is not the solution.

At some point, either through new discoveries, or through a radical reinterpretation of what is known, a new paradigm providing a new explanatory framework that includes non-psi and psi phenomena will emerge, and psi, as in telepathy, will be an anomaly no more.

Originally published: *PR.* Issue 42:16-20. (April 2007) as ‘Thoughts Through Space’ A Unique, Independently Verified, Successful, Five Month Experiment in Telepathic Reception.

References

Booth, J. (1986). *Psychic Paradoxes.* New York. Prometheus Books.

Vernon, D. (2021). *Dark Cognition: Evidence for Psi and its implications for Consciousness.* London, Routledge.

Wilkins H. Sherman H, M. (1942/2004). *Thoughts Through Space: A Remarkable Adventure in the Realm of Mind*. Charlottesville, VA. Hampton Roads Publ. Co.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The deceased writer C.S. Lewis twice visits Canon Phillips as a consoling apparition

Whether we survive death as a disembodied self-aware person is a question that divides people into those who believe that we do, those who believe that we do not, and those who remain in a state of undecided uncertainty. (See Chris Carter, 2012, for philosophical argument in support of survival, and Dianne Arcangel, 2005, for personal accounts interpreted as demonstrating survival. For a detailed philosophical argument against survival see Michael Martin & Keith Augustine, 2015). Books and articles that quote cases claimed as good evidence for personal survival carry a responsibility to ensure accuracy concerning how they present, and interpret, what is claimed to have occurred so that the reader can make an informed judgment. This is particularly important where the claim involves an apparent visual apparition of the deceased, and vocal communication of a message.

In this particular case Canon Phillips was convinced that he had received two visits from the spirit of the deceased author and Christian apologist C.S. Lewis (famous for *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Space Trilogy*, *The Problem of Pain*, and many other books) for the apparent purpose of delivering what he felt was a comforting message. To see whether his interpretation is justified, or whether there is an alternative interpretation as to what is said to have occurred, we need to adopt an impartial position and consider his account of his two experiences.

Canon J.B. Phillips

John Bertrand Phillips (1906-1982), known as J.B. Phillips, was a well known and highly respected Anglican cleric who, after obtaining his degree in Classics at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was ordained as an Anglican clergyman in 1930. He and his wife faithfully ministered to his parishioners in London's East End through the Blitz and throughout World War Two. Finding that a large number of his young parishioners were completely ignorant of the Bible, he decided to translate the New Testament into everyday English, as well as writing popular books on Christianity. His

translation of the Epistles of St Paul as *Letters to Young Churches* (1947) with a Foreword by C.S. Lewis, and *The New Testament in Modern English* (1958), were particularly well received. His books sold millions of copies, he became a member of the BBC's Religious Broadcasting Department, a regular broadcaster, and lectured widely in America. In 1955 he retired to Swanage, Dorset, to concentrate on translation and writing.

In his autobiographical book *Ring of Truth* (1967), which includes his original account of these two apparitional experiences of C.S. Lewis, Phillips described the insights he had gained as a translator into the mind of Jesus and his disciples, as well as the mind of St Paul and the first century Romano-Jewish world in which they lived. For him, the Crucifixion, the Empty Tomb and the Resurrection were historical facts without which Christianity could not have been born. He felt that C.S. Lewis's two apparitional visits to him were similar in essence to what the disciples experienced on seeing Jesus after the Resurrection. Although, as he put it, he was an 'unsuperstitious' person he was certain that he had received 'first hand incontrovertible experience of extra-sensory perception and a little of precognition.'

After his death at Swanage in 1982, Phillips' widow Vera, and close friend Edwin Robinson in their book *The Wounded Healer* (1984) paint a picture of public success and acclaim that was in sharp contrast to the inner torment of a perfectionist, certain he could not attain the perfection he felt God deserved no matter how hard he tried. In his despair at his failing to attain what he called 'this Terrible Standard' Phillips had become subject to panic attacks, and eventual descent into periods of deep clinical depression, the first of which occurred in 1961. These periods of depressive illness were particularly frequent during the 1960s, and dogged him for the rest of his life. His accounts of these two apparitional experiences of seeing C.S. Lewis and hearing his message are as follows.

From Phillips's original 1967 account

Canon Phillips recounts being home one evening and receiving an apparitional visitation from C.S. Lewis (pp 117-118). He says,

> 'The late C.S. Lewis, whom I did not know well, and had only seen in the flesh once, but with whom I had corresponded a fair amount, gave me an unusual experience. A few days after his death while I was watching television he "appeared" sitting in a chair within a few feet of

> me, and spoke a few words which were particularly relevant to the difficult circumstances through which I was passing. He was ruddier in complexion than ever, grinning all over his face and, as the old-fashioned saying has it, positively glowing with health. The interesting thing to me is that I had not been thinking about him at all. A week later, 'this time when I was in bed reading before going to sleep, he appeared again, even more rosily radiant than before, and repeated the same message, which was very important to me at the time.'

Phillips comments that 'he was just there "large as life and twice as natural"'; and goes on to say that 'the reason why I mention this personal and memorable experience is that although '"Jack Lewis" was real in a certain sense it did not occur to me that I should reach out and touch him. It is possible that some of the appearances of the risen Jesus were of this nature'.

The contemporary social context

If these two experiences of Lewis were 'a few days after his death', then it is not surprising that Canon Phillips was not thinking of C.S. Lewis that particular evening while watching television. C.S. Lewis died on Friday, 22nd November, 1963. On the same day President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as president, and the famous philosopher and author Aldous Huxley died. Two days later the assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was shot dead while in custody, and President Kennedy's state funeral took place three days after his assassination. President Kennedy's murder and the political consequences that followed from it dominated television and newspaper news for days into weeks afterwards. In contrast, C.S. Lewis's death received only passing publicity. A 'few days' after C.S. Lewis's death implies a date of around the 27/28th November, while Canon Phillips was sitting in the living room in the winter evening with the curtains drawn and the lights on, while the second appearance was in his bedroom a week later. As Phillips's book was published in 1967, he probably wrote this account during 1966, so readers could reasonably assume that this was an accurate record of what had occurred three years before in 1963.

Second account: Taken from an interview with Dennis Bardens (1969)

In late 1969, two years after Phillips' book had been published, the author

Dennis Bardens arranged to interview Canon Phillips at his home in Swanage as he intended to include his experience in his forthcoming book *Mysterious Worlds* (1970). This was a very structured interview in which Bardens went through a series of pre-prepared questions, keeping a note of Canon Phillips' answers, later reproduced in *Mysterious Worlds* (pp 149-152). This time Canon Phillips says that C.S. Lewis was sitting 'about three feet away, looking as large as life and wearing his favourite tweeds'. Phillips tells Bardens that C.S. Lewis's unexpected visitation occurred sometime in 'early June, 1966 at around 6.15pm' (so not three years earlier in November, 1963). When asked about the lighting in the living room Canon Phillips replied, 'it was bright outside, a curtain was drawn behind the TV which I was watching but there are four other windows so the room was pretty bright' (so definitely not night time with the curtains drawn). When asked if he had been thinking of C.S. Lewis, Phillips replied, 'Not particularly. He died in 1963 and I have probably been influenced quite a bit in my own thinking by reading and rereading his books'. At the time of Lewis's two visitations, Phillips had been feeling overworked, tired and depressed, and had found Lewis's message of 'It's not as difficult as you think, you know' very reassuring.

When asked about their relationship, Phillips said that he had seen Lewis only once, when he gave an address in Southwark Cathedral on an Ascension Day during the war. Their later correspondence, he said, was no more than 'desultory' at best, amounting to 'less than ten letters.' When asked how C.S. Lewis appeared, Canon Phillips replied, 'there was nothing "ghostly" about his appearance. He looked as natural as any human friend who had looked in to see me. His voice was a normal speaking voice that came from where he was sitting.' Canon Phillips went on to say that from a child he had always had a very vivid imagination, but 'this "appearance" was certainly not imaginary and had no dreamlike quality about it."' When asked who he had told about the visitation, he said that he had first told his wife, who was preparing supper. The second visitation in his bedroom was as described in his first account.

Third account: Society for Psychical Research Questionnaire (1970)

The questionnaire was conducted by the author Andrew Mackenzie and Mrs G.M. Goldney, then Secretary of the Society. When asked why he was not surprised by the visitation, Phillips said that from an early age he realised that

although we live in an earthly body we are eternal beings, and most bereaved people sense the continuing presence of the person who has died. As to the visitation itself, Canon Phillips said that it was as if C.S. Lewis was sitting in the chair facing him, dressed in his tweeds, in good health and speaking normally. The second visitation a week later, which occurred when Phillips was reading in bed, was just as real. In response to the question as to when the apparition occurred, he said:

> 'On the first occasion it was early on a Spring evening in full daylight. The room, which faces south, is almost entirely window, including a wide picture window. As I was watching television a small curtain was drawn behind the TV set itself; otherwise daylight streamed in all around. Immediately behind the figure of C.S. Lewis was part of the armchair in which he was sitting and behind that a large radiogram and record cabinet. On the second occasion when I was in bed reading I had the bedside lamp on which was my normal custom. I can tell you of no difference between this appearance and the previous one. On neither occasion had I been thinking especially about him and on neither occasion did I feel any impulse or indeed any wish to speak to him. It seemed obvious that he wished to speak to me.'

As to the tweeds, it was only later that he found that C.S. Lewis normally wore tweeds. On the one occasion that he had seen him at Southwark cathedral he had been wearing a black cassock. On both occasions the appearance and disappearance of C.S. Lewis was quite sudden and there was no one else present on either occasion.

As to his relationship with C.S. Lewis, while his own thoughts on Christian matters were stimulated by reading and rereading C.S. Lewis, there was no personal bond between them beyond occasional correspondence. Asked whether the two experiences had had any permanent effect upon him, Phillips replied that they had helped at the time, but 'I can't honestly say that it has been a daily help to me in assorted trials and tribulations.'

Philosopher Manfred Cassirer's assessment

Dr Manfred Cassirer, who was a noted paranormal researcher, refers to Hilary Evans' book on *Gods, Spirits and Cosmic Guardians* (Evans, 1987). This includes mention of C.S. Lewis's visitation to Canon Phillips in a

section devoted to revenants (returning ghosts) in which Evans says, 'the most obvious reason a spirit of the dead might have to revisit the Earth is to help and comfort those left behind'. Cassirer quotes Evans as saying that he had included this example as it was comparatively recent, those involved were well known and respected, and 'it is about as uncomplicated as such cases can be'. Cassirer disagreed, referring to the significant discrepancies as provided by Canon Phillips in his three accounts regarding the visual circumstances, the season, and even the year it is supposed to have taken place, and concludes that 'the mind-blowing contradictions in the various accounts invalidate the testimony to the apparitions to such an extent as to render them totally unacceptable.' This confusion was further confounded, said Cassirer, by Phillips telling Archdeacon Perry (1971) in answer to Perry's query concerning the different dates, that the experience may have been triggered by receiving a letter telling him how C.S. Lewis had died, which was received either in spring 1964 or early summer 1966, and he had somehow 'telescoped' his experience in memory back to November, 1963. This, Cassirer points out, is at odds with Canon Phillips saying in other accounts that he had not been thinking about C.S. Lewis. In a footnote response to Cassirer's criticisms, Evans pointed out that in the preface to his own 1987 book he had said that 'every case cited here is dubious', as what interested him was 'less whether the incident occurred than that the witness should think that it did' (Cassirer, 1988, p.35). On reflection, this comment is truly astonishing.

Hilary Evans' extended account

Fifteen years later Hilary Evans, in his book *Seeing Ghosts* (2002), places Canon Phillips' experience under a section entitled 'Apparitions offering comfort, counsel and help', Account *113.* headed *Canon J.B. Phillips. Place unnamed, November, 1963,* and refers to it as 'one of the clearest cases where an apparition manifests solely for the purpose of reassuring the percipient.' (pp 105-6). There is no mention here of uncertainty as to whether the case was dubious or not. Very misleadingly, Evans does not even mention Lewis's original 1967 account. Instead, he creates an apparently continuous quotation, woven together from sections of answers that Canon Phillips supplied in response to the Mackenzie and Goldney questionnaire. The wording is similar to the autobiographical account, but contains additional

detail (in brackets). According to this version Canon Phillips says with regard to C.S. Lewis,

> ‘A few days after his death, while I was watching television one evening in full daylight (my wife was in an adjoining room preparing supper) he “appeared” sitting in a chair less than two metres away, and spoke a few words – “it’s not as difficult as you think, you know” - which was particularly relevant to the difficult circumstances through which I was passing. He was ruddier in complexion than ever, grinning all over his face and positively glowing with health. He was dressed in rather rough, well worn brown tweeds: I realised later that I had never seen him in ordinary clothes – on the one occasion I saw him in the flesh he was wearing a black cassock. (Later I learnt that it was his habit to wear tweeds that would be comfortable rather than smart, but I did not know this at the time.) I had not been thinking about him at all. A week later, when I was in bed reading before going to sleep, he appeared again, even more rosily radiant than before, and repeated the same message, which was very important to me. It seemed obvious that he wanted to speak to me’.

The reference to ‘less than two metres’ is odd as the metric system was not in public usage in 1960s Britain, but this could have been a 2002 editorial insertion. The circumstantial detail is now at odds with late November 1963 and Evans’ own heading of ‘November, 1963’. In this account by Evans, Phillips was watching television ‘one evening in full daylight’ while his wife was preparing supper, so we can assume he was watching television around 6.15pm-7pm. It would have been dark well before 5pm in late November 1963, so if Canon Phillips did see C.S. Lewis in ‘full daylight’ it could have been no earlier than April, 1964.

Ian Wilson’s assessments (1987 & 1995)

The well-known author Ian Wilson refers to this case in two separate books. In his earlier work, *The After Death Experience* (Wilson, 1987), he quotes direct from the 1967 autobiographical account, commenting that this experience fell into the category of the friendly “drop in’ type of ghostly visitation. His main concern about such cases is expressed when he says, ‘the difficulty is the question of believing that the individual who reported the

apparition genuinely saw something real, rather than was hallucinating as there is nothing tangible, like a photograph, to proffer as proof' (p.105). In his later book. *In Search of Ghosts* (Wilson, 1995), he has become very dismissive of this case. In his opening chapter, headed 'On not trusting some ghost stories', he says that his policy was to check with named witnesses where possible, using their own words to 'minimise the inevitable errors that creep into secondhand reporting', and to check his sources carefully as 'it is important to be aware that every ghost story depends upon the honesty of those telling it, the accuracy of their memory and the reliability of their interpretation of the circumstances. Even the most authoritative and best-attested cases can be found on close scrutiny to have been seriously weakened, if not totally undermined, by some form of human frailty' (p.11).

With this comment in mind he then takes Canon Phillips' differing accounts of when C.S. Lewis's visitation occurred as a prime example of what not to trust (pp 12-13), quoting first from the original 1967 account. He points out the discrepancies contained in Phillips' replies to the SPR questionnaire, where it now apparently occurred 'early on a spring evening' instead of a late November evening. Wilson then quotes from Cassirer's review of the case where Canon Phillips says that the experience had been triggered by a letter informing him 'how he [C.S. Lewis] fared, indeed how he died.' Finally, Wilson refers to Bardens' 1969 interview where Canon Phillips says that the visitations occurred in 'early June, 1966.' Wilson concludes by saying that 'if even so distinguished and well educated a witness as Phillips cannot be relied upon to get the basic facts right, why should the sceptic be convinced?'

Discussion

We have some major inconsistences as to when the visitations are said to have occurred. In Phillips' first account it was within a few days after C.S. Lewis's death in late November, 1963. In 1969 he tells Bardens that it occurred in 'early June, 1966' and refers to the death of C.S. Lewis as being some three years earlier. However, 'early June 1966' means that he was writing his account of this experience for his book later that same year, yet still managed to get the date wrong by three years. In response to the 1970 SPR questionnaire Phillips said that it occurred 'early on a Spring evening in

full daylight'. He was aged 61 when writing his personal account and around 64 or 65 when responding to Bardens' structured interview and the 1970 SPR questionnaire. His intellectual faculties at the time with regard to other matters seem unimpaired, so it is difficult to account for his inability to remember when this important spiritual visitation occurred. He does not seem to have recorded it in a diary.

Do these apparent discrepancies invalidate the case? Wilson and Cassirer certainly thought that they did, with Cassirer arguing that these differences rendered the testimony 'totally unacceptable'. While their arguments are understandable, they may be missing the point. Whether these two apparent visitations occurred in 1963, 1964 or 1966 does not invalidate these two experiences *in themselves*, and there seems no reason to doubt his description of his two experiences.

Relationship with C.S. Lewis

Phillips told Bardens that he had only been in 'desultory' correspondence with C.S. Lewis concerning his biblical translations, and they had no personal relationship. They had met only once some 20 years earlier when Phillips was part of a group that went to the vestry to thank C.S. Lewis for his sermon at Southwark cathedral. Given C.S. Lewis's own voluminous correspondence and book writing, their intermittent correspondence over the years regarding Canon Phillips' translations was probably rather peripheral to Lewis at best. As for C.S. Lewis's appearance of 'glowing with health' and being 'rosily radiant', this is at complete odds with Lewis's bodily reality at the time of his death in November, 1963. It was public knowledge within the close knit literary world that he had been in and out of hospital and in very poor health for some time. During November, 1963, aged 64, he became seriously ill with increasing renal failure, collapsing in his bedroom at 5.30pm on the evening of the 22nd and dying a few minutes later. It is doubtful if Canon Phillips was ever aware of any of this, so it would not have affected how the apparition appeared to him.

The question

The question is: 'was this a genuine visitation by the post-mortem spirit of C.S. Lewis in apparent response to Canon Phillips' emotional needs at that particular time?' If such a visitation from beyond the grave is accepted as a

possibility, the question then becomes one of motive. Given what little Lewis would have known concerning Phillips, with whom he had only a peripheral acquaintance at best, motive seems completely non-existent for the deceased Lewis. It is really difficult to see why, whether soon after death or up to three years later, he would want to visit someone he had known only in the public sense of being a popular and very successful biblical translator and author, to utter the rather banal comment of 'it's easier than you think, you know'. He would not have known about Canon Phillips' inner torment as it was not public knowledge.

In the final chapter of his second autobiography *The Price of Success* (1984) headed 'Light at the end of the tunnel', Phillips recounts the sudden and completely unexpected onset of deep depression and the drying up of his creativity, which started in late 1961 and dogged him intermittently for the rest of his life. Although referring in detail to the help and support he received from others during the mid 1960s, and the warm response he received for his 1967 book *Ring of Truth*, he makes no mention of C.S. Lewis's two visitations at all, so they obviously had little lasting impact. Maybe, on looking back, they were no longer relevant. This would be in line with his comment in the 1970 questionnaire, where he said that the experience had not been of much help in dealing with the problems of his daily life.

Were the visitations hallucinatory appearances?

With his belief in personal life after death and acceptance of psi phenomena, Canon Phillips naturally interpreted the visitations as materialisations of the spirit of C.S. Lewis to give him comfort in his time of need. As Wilson pointed out, an alternative interpretation is that the two visitations were hallucinations. Hallucinations differ from illusions, which involve distorted or misinterpreted real perceptions. In his wide ranging discussion of hallucinations the neurologist Oliver Sachs in his book *Hallucinations* (2012, ix) says that 'hallucinations are defined as percepts arising in the absence of any external reality – seeing things or hearing things that are not there.' If you say, for example, that you can see a tree at a certain spot in front of a fence in broad daylight but no one else can see it, then that is a hallucination as there is nothing there to misinterpret. The tree that only you can see is completely integrated into your perception of the public scene and seems

absolutely real to you.

Canon Phillips says that C.S. Lewis looked and sounded as he would have done if he had been physically present and sitting in the chair and, one week later, when he appeared at his bedside. But this is not quite so. For both visitations the description is one of an exaggerated presence of someone in 'ruddy good health' who is rather oddly described as 'grinning all over his face' rather than smiling. In his discussion of the hundreds of well-attested cases of apparitional appearances that are collated in *Phantasms of the Living* (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1888) Sachs interprets these similar experiences as indicating that hallucinations can be experienced by anyone, occur to anyone, sometimes as a result of a traumatic experience such as an accident, losing a loved one, whether person or a much loved pet, or during deep unhappiness, or in a drowsy or trancelike state (pp 215-16). Sachs quotes recent brain scan research in which the experience of having a hallucination, and the type of hallucination being experienced, can be correlated consistently with specific areas of increased brain activity. This implies that internally generated hallucinations are caused by focal episodes of unusual brain activity. Although Canon Phillips did not hallucinate at will, he does say that he had a vivid imagination. The following case may help to illustrate what may have been involved.

The story of Ruth

In the late 1970s the American psychiatrist Dr Morton Schatzman brought his patient Ruth to England to meet Dr Peter Fenwick, a neuropsychiatrist at the Institute of Psychiatry and St Thomas's hospital, London. Sexually assaulted by her father when she was a child, Ruth suddenly, in adulthood, started to hallucinate his bodily presence, and it was found during analysis with Dr Schatzman that she could hallucinate scenes at will. The purpose of the visit was to run a series of electroencephalography (EEG) recordings of her brainwaves, together with other tests to see how her brain was responding when she voluntarily induced a hallucination as compared to non hallucinatory normality. From a neurophysiological point of view their findings were fascinating.

When Ruth looked at a television screen showing alternating black and white squares, then everything from her retinas to her cortical visual centres at the back of the brain (the occipital lobes) responded normally and she saw

alternating black and white squares. When she visualised her daughter sitting in front of the screen and completely obscuring it, the screen-driven responses in her visual cortex where her perception of the black and white screen was generated disappeared. Her retinas and optic nerves were responding to the screen as normal, but her hallucinatory imagery was blocking cortical reception of their impulses somewhere along the visual pathways. When they tested her auditory reception by using headphones and loud clicks, her auditory cortex in the temporal lobe behind the ears responded in time to the clicks and she heard them as normal. But when she visualised her daughter turning the volume knob down to zero her auditory cortex became silent and she, correspondingly, heard nothing although her auditory nerves were still relaying the impulses (Schatzman, 1980, pp 270-283).

These findings may help explain Canon Phillips' experience. While he was sitting facing the television and apparently watching it, this does not mean that he was consciously attending to it. Given his depressed feelings of unworthiness at the time, his mind may have been in an abstracted state, perhaps thinking over some passages in C.S. Lewis's books relevant to his emotional needs. For a brief moment he entered into an abstracted state of consciousness conducive to an hallucination of C.S. Lewis in an exaggerated appearance of ruddy good health, whose hallucinated words brought comfort. While reading in bed a week later he entered a similarly abstracted state of mind once again and the figure of C.S. Lewis reappeared, standing by his bedside and repeating the same words. During the brief period of each hallucination the activity in his visual cortex can be pictured as being momentarily reconfigured to place an hallucinatory mental image of C.S. Lewis into the room as a complete perceptual experience. He may have entered a brief state of hypnagogia (a state of consciousness on the edge of waking conducive to lucid dreaming and hallucinations) on each occasion, but without falling asleep.

The tweeds

As it seems that these were the clothes that C.S. Lewis normally wore they

would have appeared in newsreels, newspapers and photographs in colour magazines. Because tweeds are common apparel and therefore unremarkable, Canon Phillips is unlikely to have noticed them consciously, as his focus of attention would have been either on what C.S. Lewis was saying, or had written, but the visual memory would still have been there. As it was the message that was important, his hallucinatory image would need to be dressed normally, and his subconscious memory supplied the imagery of C.S. Lewis in tweeds.

Conclusion

The figure identified as C.S. Lewis by Canon Phillips can be interpreted either as a visitation by the spirit of the deceased C.S. Lewis at some time after his death, or as an hallucination created in response to inner need for reassurance. If, like Sachs and neuroscience in general, you do not interpret apparitional appearances as anything other than brain-generated hallucinations, then that latter is the only possibility. If, like Canon Phillips, you believe in life after death and the ability of that person's spirit to appear to someone, you still have to decide which of the two interpretations offers the most satisfactory explanation. The case for deciding whether a particular experience is of an apparition existing in its own right, rather than a brain-generated hallucination is usually based upon the claim that it seems causally related to an event, or events, unknown to the person seeing the apparition at the time. A typical example would be of Miss A who wakes up at 4 am to see the apparently normal figure of her mother standing in the bedroom doorway smiling at her. As she gets out of bed to go towards her mother the figure fades away and disappears. Next day she hears that her mother had died unexpectedly at the same time, and a causal connection is then made between her mother's death and her apparitional appearance at the door of Miss A's bedroom.

In contrast, Canon Phillips' two experiences were not connected in any way to the life or death of C.S. Lewis whom he greatly admired but did not know personally. As C.S. Lewis knew Canon Phillips only by repute as a successful author, his spirit would have had no reason to visit him, whether soon after death or up to some three years after his death. It seems that the image of C.S. Lewis suddenly appeared, said the same banal words on each occasion, and disappeared. The most probable explanation would seem to be

that on each occasion Canon Phillips experienced a momentary hallucination of C.S. Lewis while in an abstracted state of mind. In the light of this alternative explanation, the most reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that the case of Canon Phillips and C.S. Lewis should not be quoted as an example of post-mortem communication beyond all reasonable doubt.

Original publication: *PR.* No 67: 3-9. July, 2013, as 'Canon Phillips and C.S. Lewis: A cautionary canonical tale'

References

Arcangel, D. (2005). *After life Encounters: Ordinary people, Extraordinary experiences.* Charlottesville, VA. Hampton Roads,

Gardens, D. (1970). *Mysterious Worlds.* London, W.H. Allen

Carter, C, (2012). *Science and the Afterlife: Evidence for the immortality of consciousness.* Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions.

Cassirer, M. (1988). The Ghost of C.S. Lewis. *Journal SPR*. vol 55:33-35.

Evans, H. (2002). *Seeing Ghosts: Experiences of the paranormal.* London, John Murray.

Gurney, E. Myers., F.W.H. Podmore, F. (1888). *Phantasms of the Living.* London. Trubner & Co.

Mackenzie, A. Goldney, K, M. (1970). Two experiences of an apparition. *Journal SPR* vol 45: 389-391.

Martin, M. Augustine, K. (2015). *The Myth of an Afterlife: The Case against Life after Death.*

Lanham, Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield

Perry, M. (1971). Correspondence. *JSPR* 46. No 749: 203-206

Phillips, J,B. (1967). *Ring of Truth: A translator's testimony.* London, Hodder and Stoughton.

Phillips, J, B. (1984). *The Price of Success: An autobiography.* London, Hodder & Stoughton.

Phillips, V. Robinson, E. (1984). *The Wounded Healer – J.B. Phillips.* London, Triangle, SPCK.

Sacks, O. (2012). *Hallucinations.* London, Picador.

Schatzman, M. (1980). *The Story of Ruth: One woman's haunting psychiatric odyssey.* New York, Putman & Sons.

Vilson, I. (1987). *The After Death Experience.* London, Sidgwick & Jackson.
Vilson, I. (1995). *In Search of Ghosts.* London, Headline Publishing.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Wilbur Wright sees the gloveless ghost of air gunner Stoker and Pilot Officer Worley's presentiment of death fulfilled on the same day

As discussed in previous chapters, paranormal experiences such as telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, are experiences that have no explanation based upon mainstream science, psychology and the neurosciences. Classified as Extrasensory Perceptions (ESP), they are considered to be expressions of a hypothesised mental faculty termed Psi, and are known as psi phenomena.

Opinion remains sharply divided between those who believe that while very unusual experiences occur, paranormal experiences do not (see Holt et al 2012), and those who believe that paranormal experiences do occur (see Mayer, 2007, Rhine Feather and Schmicker 2005). For the latter, deciding whether a non psi-based, or a psi-based, explanation can best account for a reported experience or event will depend upon assessing the validity of the account itself, the circumstances in which it is said to have occurred, the perceived probity of those involved, and what external testimony exists to confirm that account.

Experiences of seeing a ghost or an apparition as an entity that exists in its own right independent of the viewer will fall into the psi-based category of explanation if neither the circumstances, nor the known state of mind and knowledge at the time, can offer a reasonable non psi-based explanation. When reading through compilations of such cases, especially if selected for inclusion by a well known author on the subject, the likely presumption on the part of the reader is that each account has been confirmed beyond reasonable doubt, or the author would not have included it. Wartime accounts of seeing a ghost or apparition of a serviceman who has been killed, or of seeing a precognition of death fulfilled in battle, as in the two cases to follow, carry a particular authenticity. The reader naturally assumes that the circumstances in which they are claimed to have occurred can be verified from official accounts and service records.

The gloveless ghost

The following reported experience of seeing and conversing with a ghost, or more correctly in this case, of an apparition looking and behaving like an ordinary person, is presented in the form of two separate quotations as provided by Evan (Wilbur) Wright as percipient. Evan Wright, always referred to as Wilbur Wright, trained as a RAF ground engineer just before the Second World War, worked as a ground engineer on bombers after WW2 had commenced, and then trained to become a fighter pilot. The first quotation, as given to him by Wright, is taken from Colin Wilson's well-known book *Beyond the Occult* (1988/2008). An abridged version of the same account can be found in Ian Wilson's book *In Search of Ghosts* (1995, pp 60-61), who quotes Colin Wilson as reference. The second quotation is taken from Wright's later account of this same experience in his book *Time: Gateway to Immortality* (1993).

Extract from Colin Wilson 1988

In his Foreword to Wright's book *Time: Gateway to Immortality*, Colin Wilson says that he first met Wright in the mid 1980s, when his literary agent asked if he would look at a typescript of an intended book by Wright, entitled *Immortality and the I Ching.* Wilson met Wright to discuss his ideas and this quotation is from an unpublished manuscript which, several years later, became the basis for the later, published book.

> 'In early 1941 I was stationed at RAF, Hemswell, Lincoln, as a ground engineer. I returned from leave by bus late one Sunday evening completely out of cigarettes, and all the canteens were closed. But I remembered I had left some cigarettes in the hangar and walked down in the blackout, entering the hangar through the central steel doors at the front. The aircrew room was on the right where flying personnel of 61 Bomber Squadron kept their flying clothing. I heard a noise from the crew room and opened the door to investigate. It was in total darkness and I switched on the light: the black-out curtains were in position and I saw a figure in uniform groping in one of the lockers. He was wearing a flying helmet, a leather fur-lined jacket, black knee-length flying boots and I recognised him as Leading Aircraftsman Stoker, a mid-upper gunner on the Hampden bomber who had to fly with the hood open to look for attacking fighters (this was before all aircrew had sergeant rank to gain improved treatment for POWs).

I said “Hey Stoke - what are you doing?”

He replied irritably, “I can’t find my bloody gloves.”

“Well, that’s your problem” I said. “Put the lights out when you go.”

He made no reply to that and I re-entered the hangar, found my cigarettes, and went back

to my billet. Next morning I went to breakfast and, as always happens, I asked the man next to me what had happened during my week’s absence “‘Very dodgy two nights ago” he said “They went mine-laying in the Dortmund Ems Canal and we lost McIntyre and his crew, hit by low level flak, rolled and went straight in. The mine went off – they had no chance.”

“My God!” I said. “That chap Stoker had a lucky escape then!”

“Stoker? Oh, he went in with the rest. There was trouble before they took off – he couldn’t find his flying gloves and he could have been frozen to death with the rear gun hatch open. He was moaning all the way out on the transport.”

I said nothing at the time, but this preyed on my mind, and two days later I reported sick and told the Medical Officer what had happened. He said he believed me, gave me some pills to help me sleep, and as time went on the shakes stopped and I forgot about it.

Looking back the most remarkable aspect was that the air gunner looked perfectly normal to me. His clothing creaked as usual while he moved. His face was worried but in no way unremarkable, and it was only later that I realised that he had been groping round in his flying-clothing locker in pitch darkness. I took the advice of the MO on the station and told the story to nobody else. He asked me to write an account of it in longhand, which I did on the back of a sheet of Station Routine Orders and gave it to him. Ever since I have wondered how many of these things we see in broad daylight, regarding them as normal human beings. As I see it, there is no way to distinguish them as a living breathing person.’”

Comment

This account consists of two mutually supportive statements:

1. Seeing the annoyed and frustrated figure of Stoker late on Sunday evening, dressed in his flying uniform, groping in his opened locker, and answering Wright’s question by saying in a very irritated voice that he could

not find his flying gloves.

2. Being informed during breakfast on Monday morning that Stoker had boarded the Hampden bomber, piloted by McIntyre, moaning that he could not find his gloves, and had been shot down on Saturday night while on a mission to lay mines in the Dortmund-Ems Canal, with the mine exploding on impact, killing all onboard.

The two statements imply that Wright had received information from Stoker's apparition concerning Stoker's lost gloves - information that he could not possibly have known at the time. If this is so, then a psi-based explanation seems the only tenable explanation. The degree of noisy activity generated by Stoker's apparition was very unusual. It made enough noise while rummaging in the locker to attract Wright's attention to the closed door of the crew room as he entered the hangar. As the locker door was open, Stoker's apparition was obviously able to turn the locker key or somehow spring the lock.

But if a key – what key? Stoker's key is likely to have been on Stoker's dead body. As he died on Saturday night his locker, like all the lockers of the downed crew, would have been cleared of his effects during Sunday morning and relocked with a duplicate key to be handed to his replacement. Another odd thing was that Stoker had been searching for his gloves in the dark. If, however, this was a post-mortem apparitional replay of Stoker's experience of searching for his gloves before going on the fatal mission, then maybe in his apparitional state of mind, the light was on and the locker open as a replay of memory.

Extract from Wright's own published account

In his Introduction to *Time: Gateway to Immortality* Wright provides what, at first reading, seemed a more or less identical account of seeing Stoker's apparitional appearance and the ensuing aftermath of distress as quoted in Colin Wilson's book. I initially took for granted that this was so, but on rereading Wright's first account as quoted in Wilson, I was puzzled by some discrepancies between the two accounts. Here is Wright's second account.

> 'Returning from leave in 1940 to my Lincolnshire bomber station I had no cigarettes but knew there was a supply in my locker in the hangar. The squadrons were not operating that night: all was dark and quiet under a starry frosty sky. At midnight I entered the hangar crew room in

darkness, first checking the blackouts were in position – and realised I was not alone. Someone was groping in a steel locker not far from mine and I recognised Stoker, a mid-upper gunner on McIntyre's Hampden crew who normally flew with the turret open for optimum visibility. Clad in black flying boots, uniform trousers, tunic and Irwin jacket, he was rummaging urgently in his flying clothing locker.

I said "Hey, Stoke – what're you doing?"

Avoiding my eyes, he said irritably: "Can't find my bloody gloves."

"Hard luck. Turn the lights out, will you?"

I found my cigarettes and so to bed. At breakfast, after an absence of a week, I asked my neighbour what had happened while I was away. "Oh, the usual. Very dodgy night before last. They went to the Dortmund Ems Canal to drop mines. McIntyre ran into heavy flak and bought it over the target."

"My God" I said "Stoker was damn lucky not going."

"Stoker? Oh he went in with the rest! There was a ruckus before they left – someone had nicked his flying gloves. He went without them in the end and it was a damned cold night. He was moaning all the way on the transport bus"

"You mean," I said slowly, "he bought it too".

"That's what I said innit? Mac took a direct hit at lower level and went straight in. The mine went off. They had no chance at all".

I went back to my room. Two days later the shakes began: I went to the Doc who gave me a stiff sedative and asked me to write down exactly what happened. This I did on the back of some Daily Routine Orders but the shakes went on. The MO took me off duty for three days, told me to forget about it, but many weeks passed before life became normal again. Why? In my eyes Stoker had appeared perfectly normal, had opened his locker door – meaning that he was "solid" as far as that goes. He heard me, spoke to me, and what really terrified me was this: how many more of these things are walking around in our world, indistinguishable from living persons? It was not so much meeting a ghost, but rather trying to reconcile that with everyday reality in which impossible things did not happen.

Comment

This account retains the same two mutually supportive statements, from which Wright later concluded that when he switched on the light in the crew room and saw Stoker he had seen an apparitional replay of Stoker searching for his gloves before going on the fatal mission. The difference is that in this account Wright remembers that his cigarettes are in his locker in the crew room and therefore goes straight there. In the earlier account he remembers that they are in the hangar, and after speaking to Stoker he goes back into the hangar find his cigarettes. In this account he is not attracted by any noise coming through the closed door before he opens it. He switches on the light, and only then does he hear and see someone groping in a nearby steel locker and recognises Stoker in full flying gear.

In this account he says that this experience took place on a frosty night in 1940 instead of early 1941, but this, of course, could be a slip of memory concerning the same 1940-41 winter period. As it was a week's leave he would, as he said, have returned on the Sunday. Neither account provides any indication that Wright was in an unusual state of mind at the time. He was just a young serviceman coming back from a week's leave who went into the hangar to find his cigarettes. The MO asked him to write an account of his experience on the back of Station Routine Orders to insert into his medical file as the reason for granting him sick leave.

What remains unexplained in both accounts is Wright's lack of surprise at seeing Stoker in full flying gear at night looking for his flying gloves when the aerodrome was silent, the bombers grounded and the crews off duty and presumably in bed. Why he mentions that Stoker's eyes remained averted from his remains unexplained.

Investigative findings

The first question to be answered is whether there are any official records confirming that Leading Aircraftsman mid gunner Stoker and pilot McIntyre were stationed at RAF Hemswell at the time, and whether both men were lost during a Hampden bomber mine-laying raid on the Dortmund-Ems canal during winter 1940-41. Fixing the date of the attack will fix the date of Wright's experience, confirm the prior existence of Stoker and McIntyre, and the fact that they were shot down on that night-time bombing raid.

I consulted the records in full expectation that they would confirm Wright's breakfast conversation. With the official records to hand I would

have ended my essay by saying that they confirm that Stoker and pilot McIntyre were shot down that Saturday night on a mine-laying raid, so Wright could not have known about it on the Sunday. As there seems no apparent reason why, as a young service engineer returning from leave, he would have invented the experience of seeing and speaking to the apparition of Leading Aircraftsman Stoker groping in his locker for his lost gloves, together with his conversation at breakfast and later with the MO, I would have concluded that we could accept this as a genuine experience beyond reasonable doubt.

But to my shock, there was no RAF record confirming such a raid, no mention of Stoker or pilot McIntyre as service personnel, no possibility that the breakfast conversation could have occurred, or that he would have seen the MO, and therefore no record of his experience on the back of Station Routine Orders.

No. 61 Bomber Squadron RAF

From September 1939 to July 1941, No. 61 Bomber Squadron RAF was based at RAF Hemswell, Lincolnshire, and equipped with twin-engined Hampden bombers. During the summer of 1941 it was re-equipped with four-engined Manchester bombers, and later with four-engined Lancasters. Online inquiry for 'No 61 Bomber Squadron RAF' as to the date of the Hampden raid elicited the following response: 'No results found for 61 bomber squadron mine laying dortmund-ems canal 1940/1941' (retrieved 8/10/13). Another online site 'Attacks on the Dortmund_Ems Canal – Luftwaffe and Allied Air Forces Discussion Forum' elicited the same result (retrieved 21/10/13) as did online searches for No 5 Bomber Group, which included 61 Bomber Squadron RAF.

In the published operational diary of RAF bomber raids compiled by Middlebrook and Everett (2011) there is no record of a 1940/1941 mine-laying attack on the Dortmund-Ems Canal by any squadron. Assuming a possible error by Wright's breakfast companion as to the nature of the raid in which Stoker was killed, further online inquiry for 1940/1941 bombing raids by 61 Bomber Squadron on the Canal, or on the linked cities of Dortmund and Emden also drew a blank, a result confirmed by Middlebrook and Everett. In case Stoker had died during some other mine-laying operation by No 61 Squadron Hampden bombers Middlebrook and Everett were again

consulted. Records show that there were ten mine-laying operations by that squadron during this period over the North Sea and English Channel, opposite ports and river estuaries under German occupation when Hampden bombers were lost, but none of these were carried out on a Saturday night and none included Stoker and McIntyre.

As Stoker was alive when Wright went on leave, and killed the day before he returned from leave on Sunday, maybe his bomber was shot down while engaged upon some other mission. The next line of inquiry was to establish whether there is any record of a Hampden bomber of 61 Bomber Squadron piloted by a McIntyre with Stoker as mid-upper gunner that was shot down at any time during 1940/1941. A series of RAF Bomber Command volumes (Chorley 1993, 2013) list all RAF Bomber Command losses in planes and personnel for each day of each year of the Second World War. Volumes One and Two deal with 1939/1940 and 1941 respectively. The column layout of these volumes is by date, squadron number, type of bomber, operation undertaken, circumstances of loss and the names of dead or injured crew. No Hampden bomber piloted by a McIntyre either with, or without, Stoker as a member of the gun crew is listed as being shot down or having crashed for either year, nor is there any RAF record of a Leading Aircraftsman gunner called Stoker or a pilot called McIntyre.

Discussion

This absence of official confirmation of any mine-laying attack by No 61 Squadron Hampdens on the Dortmund-Ems Canal, and the absence of any record of the loss of a Hampden bomber piloted by a McIntyre with mid gunner Stoker on board, raises a truly baffling question: why would a twenty one year old man, trained as a very practical engineer and coming back from a week's leave, tell his MO that he saw Stoker's ghost in full flying gear looking for his gloves when both he, and the MO, would have known that this raid never happened?

Many of Wright's former comrades would have been alive in 1988 when Colin Wilson's book was published, so there would have been a good chance of his account being challenged at the time. There is the possibility that the names were pseudonyms, but this seems unlikely, as elsewhere in his 1993 book, he refers to Stoker as a friend he chatted with while servicing the bombers. His account of seeing Stoker's apparently solid apparition wearing full flying gear that creaked as he moved, comes across in a very convincing wartime scenario because he was at Hemswell during this period and Hampden bombers were stationed there. His description of the unnerving effect of his experience when he realised the implications of that encounter is also very understandable.

As the mine-laying raid never happened, the conversation at breakfast which reads very similarly in both accounts never happened. There was no report written on the back of Daily Routine Orders. The unexpected outcome of this inquiry becomes even more baffling when placed within the following context of Wright's distinguished war service and subsequent civilian career.

Evan (Wilbur) Wright

Evan (Wilbur) Wright's (1919–1994) 22 year career in the RAF commenced when he joined as a member of the two hundred strong 33rd Aircraft Apprentice Entry 1936-1938, at RAF Halton, where he trained to become an aircraft engineer. On qualifying he was subsequently stationed at Hemswell aerodrome where the above experience is said to have taken place. In 1942 he trained as a fighter pilot, flying Hurricanes, Spitfires, Typhoons, Hawker Tempests, Meteors and early jets such as the Javelin. After the war Wright spent a period as a RAF flying instructor, then transferred to air traffic and radar control and was a Transport Command captain in the Middle East before retirement.

In civilian life he lived in Southampton, was a company director, literary reviewer and a technical author on hovercraft development and design. He also became a prolific novelist, with some his crime novels being published under the pseudonym of David Graham. His *Down to a Sunless Sea* (1980) and *Carter's Castle* (1983) became best sellers, with the latter a

US Literary Guild Choice. His 1990 book *Millergate: The Real Glenn Miller Story* (an investigation into the still unsolved mystery of American band leader Glenn Miller's disappearance over the English Channel on the 15th December 1944 while flying to Paris) shows an aptitude for precise detail and double checking of sources. *Time: Gateway to Immortality* is a technical treatise on the nature of mind demonstrating a deep understanding of science and philosophy. He continued to edit the quarterly Newsletter for ex-members of the 33rd RAF Aircraft Apprentice Entry until his death from multiple myeloma in 1994. Married with one son, and with a passion for restoring vintage cars, the overall impression of Wright is of a highly intelligent, honest, very brave, hard working individual with a technical turn of mind. He was also a successful novelist, but although this indicates a creative turn of mind, writing fiction is very different from inventing a personal experience of seeing a ghost and presenting it to the reader as a fact.

Pilot Officer (P/O) Douglas Worley's dream presentiment of death that same day

In March 1945 Wright was a pilot in No. 3 Fighter Squadron flying Hawker Tempest fighters, stationed in France south of the Rhine as part of the 2nd Tactical Air Force. Another member was the celebrated RAF fighter ace Pierre Clostermann. In Clostermann's 1951 book *The Big Show* there is a photograph of his fellow pilots including Wright, who is sitting in the front row next to Doug Worley on his right and Torpy (no forename) on his left. This photograph is reproduced in Wright's book. The caption underneath is headed 'Trigger Mechanism' and after naming who is in the photograph he adds the sentence 'It was the precognitive death dream of Doug Worley, and its implications, that sparked off the author's search for a Time Mechanism which ended 46 years later with the publication of this book.'

According to Wright's account, P/O Douglas Worley, with whom he had flown in combat for the last three years, asked him one morning to look after a parcel of his effects and send them to his family as, following a half awake/half asleep dream in which he was 'taxi-ing along a runway very fast and the whole tail was on fire', Worley knew with a quiet certainty that he was 'for the chop' that day. Wright describes the conversation as follows:

> 'Doug came to me one morning with a small bundle of private possessions. He was pale but composed, as he lit a cigarette his fingers

were steady.

"See my family gets this stuff will you? I have a feeling I am due for the chop today."

"Balls" I said rudely. "We all get that feeling at times."

"Not like this," Doug shook his head decisively. "I wasn't dreaming. Sort of half-awake, half asleep. I was taxi-ing along a runway very fast and the whole tail was on fire.'"

Wright says that he spoke to the Commanding Officer Bruce Cole (back row in the photograph) who 'tried to convince Worley that he was battle-happy and needed a day or two of rest, but without success.' Worley was so determined and matter-of-fact that he convinced both Wright and Bruce Cole that he was alright to fly, so he remained on the roster.

During that same day Wright and Worley flew as two of a flight of eight Hawker Tempests directed to strafe a large German airfield near Lake Schwerin, east of Hamburg in North Germany. They were met with intense radar-directed flak and five were shot down. As described by Wright, 'three of us came out alive but damaged, but Doug Worley was not amongst them. I last saw him on my starboard wing tip, 20 feet above the runway, red flames streaming back from the cockpit. Deliberately he turned a few degrees to starboard and flew into the open mouth of the hangar which exploded, destroying nine German aircraft inside.'

Worley's presentiment, rather than actual precognition, of his death that same day as witnessed by Wright was, says Wright, the 'Trigger mechanism' referred to under the photograph that prompted him to write his inquiry into the nature of precognition and whether we survive death. He says that 'Doug Worley received no decoration, posthumously or otherwise. It wasn't our turn for gongs that month. But afterwards, I became obsessed by the phenomenon itself. *How could Doug Worley have foreseen his own death in a dream, unless it was a fixed, immutable and observable event up there in the future?*' (p. 7, original italics).

Wright says that after the war he met a certain Herr Schwab, a Luftwaffe flak gunner stationed at Schwerin airfield, who told him that they had been informed that an attack was coming that day, so were fully prepared. Wright comments that for them to know that they would be attacked indicated there must have been a mole in the Intelligence Corp.

Official RAF records check

As with the case of Stoker, I needed RAF confirmation of the date of the raid, who was on it, and details of P/O Worley's death. In response to an inquiry as to the March date of Douglas Worley's death, Christer Landberg, Webmaster@hawkertempest.se posted an extract from Volume Three of the 2nd Tactical Air Force series, dated 30th April, 1945. It recorded that at 18.45 pm five Tempest pilots, including P/O Torpy and P/O Worley, attacked Schwerin airfield. Two pilots were shot down, one of whom was Douglas Worley. Wilbur Wright was not one of the five named pilots on that particular mission, so he could not have seen his friend shot down. There is no mention of Worley's plane being on fire, or that he flew into a hangar that blew up, destroying nine German planes.

I was so stunned by this finding, and was so sure that there must be some mistake, because Wright's account of the scene is so graphic, that I borrowed the volume from the public library to check the lists of daily flying missions undertaken by Hawker Tempest fighters of No.3 Squadron RAF for every day from the 1st March to the end of the war, but there was no mistake.

Timing

This raises a baffling question. Wright obviously expected the reader to accept each of these two experiences as genuine, so why set each of them in circumstances where he knew that they could not possibly have happened? Take the Stoker case. The Hampden bombers never flew mine-laying raids over Germany at night because navigational accuracy was so poor in 1940/41 that they would never have found the target, let alone possess the accuracy to drop mines in a flak-defended canal in the few places where they might breach the canal walls. They laid mines in the English Channel at night opposite German controlled ports.

Again, why set the Worley account in March, 1945? Schwerin airfield is near Hamburg, North Germany, so was well beyond the operational range of Hawker Tempest fighters of No. 3 Squadron RAF throughout March when they were still stationed south of the Rhine. Schwerin airfield only came within range after the Rhine had been crossed in mid March and they were able to occupy airfields north of the Rhine by mid April. Wright would not even have seen Schwerin airfield until the first raid in late April, and as he

was in the squadron right to the end of the war he would have known that his friend P/O Worley had been killed on the 30th April and, even more importantly, he would have known that he did not see him die.

Discussion

There is no indication that Wright ever published an account of his wartime experiences during the late 1940s and 1950s like so many other ex-service personnel, so the earliest published record we have for his encounter with the ghost of Stoker is the quotation contained in Colin Wilson's 1988 account. Wilson, having met Wright socially, obviously felt that he had no reason to doubt Wright's story and seek confirmation from Bomber Command records concerning the Dortmund-Ems Canal night time mine-laying raid. There seemed no possible reason why Wright would fabricate such a convincingly detailed account of seeing an apparition of Stoker looking for his gloves, and what happened afterwards. The author Ian Wilson, in turn, must also have felt that the story rang so true that he just quoted Colin Wilson as reference.

We have no answer as to why, or even when, Wright made up this story of an encounter with an apparition that could so easily be refuted from RAF records. The same applies to his account of Douglas Worley's alleged presentiment of his death on the same day, of him seeing Worley shot down in flames and blowing up a German hangar, and meeting a certain Herr Schwab after the war who said that they knew the March raid was coming when, in fact, this meeting never happened because the raid never happened.

Both refuted accounts seem at complete odds with what we can learn about Wright's courageous RAF career, his subsequent technical career in civilian life, trusted editor of that quarterly ex-comrades letter, and author of a searching inquiry into the nature of time, precognition and possible life after death. The somewhat overworked term of 'cognitive dissonance' really does seem to apply here.

The problem of authentication

The problem is that if we assume that psi in its various forms of ESP is a genuine phenomenon, and if we can find no apparent reason from what we know about a person and the circumstances as to why they would make up a fictional story, there seems no reason to reject their account as untrue - apart, of course, from a prior disbelief in ESP. If others inform us that they were

told about the experience at the time or, in the case of precognition, before the event occurred, or it had been noted in diaries or dated letters, then this does offer strong supportive evidence for taking their account as genuine and we can be reasonably certain we are presenting a true case.

Although, in these two cases, we have only Wright's account, the lack of direct, corroborative, evidence seems more than compensated for by their convincing detail, the authenticity of the wartime circumstances in which they are said to have occurred, and the fact that he was there. If apparitions and fulfilled precognitions are accepted as genuine phenomena, why doubt that they had occurred in each case as Wright described?

Provenance

In the light of this investigative experience (and maybe this is an unfair concern because Wright's case is such an unusual 'one off') the provenance of the hundreds of personal accounts collated and summarised in many popular compilations seems rather uncertain. Which of these personal accounts, if not confirmed by other people, or by diaries or dated letters, can we trust? Should only the latter be accepted as genuine evidence, and unsubstantiated personal accounts categorised under 'maybe'?

The problem is one of carefully assessing whether a claimed experience was a psi experience in its own right. But this can be done only if the account includes mention of an external fact that can be checked. In most cases the claimed ESP experience is placed within a context that cannot be checked, and the reader has to decide for themselves whether or not they can accept the claim. In such cases it becomes a matter of assessing the balance of probability.

Conclusion

This completely unexpected outcome as to what was expected to be one of RAF confirmation concerning the death of Stoker during a Saturday night bombing raid, and pilot Douglas Worley's death during a strike on Scherwin airfield, should not be taken as demonstrating that phenomena such as ghosts, apparitions and phantasms do not occur in their own right, because that is a separate issue. The same applies concerning the possibility of presentiment and precognition. What it does is raise the question of how we can assess the authenticity of any reported paranormal experience that reads so very

convincingly.

Originally published *JSPR* 81: 194-204. July. 2017 as: The Gloveless Ghost of Air Gunner Stoker and Pilot Douglas Worley's apparent premonition of death: Two very baffling and disturbing cases.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Dr Tom Ruffles for his kind checking of the original text and his perceptive comments.

References

Chorley, W.R. *Royal Air Force Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War*.
Vol. One (1993) *Aircraft and Crew Losses* 1939/1940
Vol. Two. (2013) *Aircraft and Crew Losses* 1941 (2nd ed.) Leicester, Midland County Publications.

Clostermann, P. (1951). *The Big Show: The Greatest Pilot's Story of World War II*. London, Cassell.

Feather, S.R., Schmicker, M. (2005). *The Gift*. London, Rider.

Middlebrook, M. Everett, C. (2011). *The Bomber Command War Diary: An operational reference book 1939-45*. Hersham, Surrey. Midland Publishers.

Wilson, C. (1988/2006). *Beyond the Occult: Twenty Years Research into the Paranormal*. London, Bantam Books.

Wilson, I. (1995). *In Search of Ghosts*. London, Headline books.

Wright, W. (1990). *Millergate: The Real Glenn Miller Story*. Southampton, Wrightway Publishing .

Wright, W. (1993). *Time: Gateway to Immortality*. Southampton, Wright Books.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Identical Twins and Telesomatic Telepathy: When an uninjured twin feels the pain of their injured twin who is elsewhere

Everyone is familiar with the idea of telepathy as direct communication between minds, and in the discussion that follows telepathic communication will be taken as a fact. Surveys have shown that telepathy is more common

between identical twins, especially between those twins who shared the same placenta and amniotic sac until birth, known as ‘late splitters’, compared to non-identical twins and the general population. Surveys indicate that around 20-25% of the general population say that they have had one or more telepathic experiences. This rises to around 30-35% for non-identical twins, 40-45% for identical twins in general, and 50-60% for ‘late splitters’ (Playfair, 2012).

These experiences may take the form of shared thoughts and ideas, but more often they involve shared physical distress, as when a non-injured twin feels the injury and pain being experienced by the injured twin. This sharing sometimes goes much further, in that besides feeling the pain and type of injury, the non-injured twin develops physical signs and symptoms that mirror to some degree the bodily injury sustained by the other twin. This is known as ‘telesomatic telepathy’ (from the Greek, ‘tele’ transmission, and ‘soma’, meaning the body). While it is easy to imagine the telepathic sharing of mental experiences in the form of mental imagery, it is much more difficult to see how such a sharing of imagery could cause bodily changes in an uninjured twin’s body. To try and answer that question I will propose a possible explanation as to how this might occur.

Before I present some examples of telesomatic telepathy, here is an imaginary example. Suppose you have a friend staying with you, and you have decided to finish off a task in your shed while they are reading a book. You drop a heavy hammer on your sandalled left foot and are hopping around in agony. Eventually you limp indoors looking for sympathy, only to find your friend doubled up in pain and clutching their left foot. When you both gingerly take your sandals off you are astonished to see a bruise forming on their foot that looks just like the bruise forming on your foot.

Examples of Telesomatic Telepathy

The following examples have been taken from the 3rd edition of *Twin Telepathy* (2012) by the late Guy Lyon Playfair, a recognised expert on the subject of twin telepathy, who personally investigated each of the cases in his book, as well as reviewing the growing research literature.

- In 1976 Marta and Silvia Landa are four year old identical twins living in a small village some ten miles from Logrono in northern Spain. Silvia goes to stay with their grandparents who live in Logrono. Marta,

at home, touches a hot clothes iron with her hand, resulting in a large, painful, and angry red blister that needs medical dressing. At the same moment Silvia feels a sudden sharp pain in her hand with a resulting large and angry red blister that requires dressing by the local doctor. When Silvia returns home their parents see that their blisters are mirror images of each other on the same part of the hand. The grandparents state that Silvia was not near anything hot and had not touched anything hot at the time that she suddenly complained of feeling a hot sharp pain in her hand.

- In 1975 Nita Hust, a hospital worker, suddenly experiences acute pains in her left side and down her left leg. Baffled and worried, she decides to seek help from the matron who sees large bruises forming along Nita's left side without any apparent cause. At about the same time, and some 400 miles away, her twin sister Nettie Porter has been involved in a car accident, suffering injury and identical areas of painful bruising to her left side.

- In 1948 Alice Lambe, aged 20, of Springfield, Illinois, is sitting at home quietly reading when she experiences the sensation of a massive blow to the left side of her chest that makes her scream out to her father that 'Something has happened to Dianne', before fainting and falling from her chair. At the same moment her twin sister Dianne has been involved in a train accident some 70 miles away in which two left ribs are broken. Over the next three weeks Alice's pain is so severe that she is unable to go to work. She is X-rayed and the plate shows fractures in the same two ribs at the same sites.

- Dr Alison Armour, a hospital doctor in Scotland, returns home tired out from her shift and goes to bed early. At 9.30 pm, she wakes up to feel a severe pain in her nose that becomes so intense that she has to take some analgesics. At the same time her twin sister Aileen Biggs, who is some 80 miles away in Edinburgh, is swimming in a hotel pool when another swimmer shoots up from underneath her, ramming her in the face and breaking her nose.

- Kelly and his twin brother, from Staten Island, Jersey, attend two different schools in New York. One day Kelly, having arrived at school, experiences sudden severe pains in his eyes, nose, back of his head and his ribs from no apparent cause and looks bruised. Later that day he is told that his brother has been badly beaten up at about the same time and is in hospital, suffering from a broken nose, fractured eye sockets and cheekbones, a fractured skull and rib injuries.

- In an article published in an Australian magazine, Joyce Crominski, sister to twins Peg and Helen, describes how Peg was involved in a late night, head-on car crash, in which her chest was crushed so violently against the steering wheel that she died in an ambulance before it could reach hospital. Helen, who is asleep miles away, suddenly wakes up at the same time screaming with agonising pain in her chest, and also dies in an emergency ambulance while on her way to hospital.

- Lady Thelma Furness was pregnant, living in England with her husband Lord Furness, and expecting the birth in early May. Gloria Vanderbilt, her identical twin, was in New York, planning to travel to England to be with her sister for the birth. On the 31st March, 1929, while preparing to go out for a social lunch, Gloria suddenly experienced such violent abdominal pains that she said to her maid that, 'if I didn't know such a thing was out of the question, I would think I was having a baby'. Telling her maid to cancel the lunch engagement she took some sedatives, retired to bed and eventually managed to sleep for a few hours. On waking, she saw a telegram from Lord Furness announcing the premature birth of a baby son.

- Carol, a mother from Rockland, Maine, described how her husband inadvertently banged the car door on the right hand fingers of one of her twin girls who immediately screamed with pain. Her twin screamed too. What they were not expecting was that the uninjured twin developed an identical, painful, sharp crease across her fingers with bruising. They were mirror image twins and the crease and bruising occurred in her left hand.

Familial telesomatic background

Where Playfair was able to obtain a family background, he found that in all such dramatic cases the twins or, in the case of young children, their parents, reported a history of injuries to one or other twin, with telesomatic responses in the uninjured twin. In their 1959 book *Double Exposure: A Twin Autobiography*, Gloria Vanderbilt and Thelma Furness said that this sharing of each other's thoughts and feelings, 'this psychic bond, this common entity', was in many ways the strongest influence in their lives. They often mirrored each other's illnesses. For example, just before she married Reginald Vanderbilt on the 6th March, 1923, Gloria developed a very sore throat, which she kept secret so as not to delay the marriage. Soon afterwards she was diagnosed with severe diptheria. Thelma, then in Europe and unaware of Gloria's illness, also developed a persistent sore throat and felt very unwell at the same time

Twins Aily Biggs and Alison Armour also reported many such experiences to Playfair. For example, when Alison was out running one day she tripped over a pothole, falling down hard and badly spraining her ankle. Aily, elsewhere, and definitely not running, experienced a sudden pain in the same foot and ankle that spread up her leg and the side of her body, mirroring Alison's bodily pain and discomfort.

According to their parents, when Marta had tonsillitis and a temperature of 102°F (38.8°C), Silvia, whose tonsils were not inflamed, said that she felt unwell, also looked unwell, and had a temperature of 102°F. On another occasion Marta jumped out of the car, ran into the house and then suddenly complained for no observable reason that she could not move her foot. At the same moment Silvia had got the same foot entangled with the seat belt. On another occasion, when one twin received a slap for being naughty, the other twin, well out of sight and sound, suddenly burst into tears. Playfair recounts many examples of paired simultaneous injuries that seem to imply the occurrence of closely synchronised telesomatic experiences occurring beyond chance coincidence.

The Marta and Silvia Investigation

When news of the paired blister incident became public knowledge, nine members of the Spanish Parapsychology Society, including psychologists, psychiatrists and doctors, decided to investigate in more detail, and visited

the twins' home. Marta stayed on the ground floor with her mother and some of the investigators who would apply a series of sudden stimulus tests. Silvia went upstairs to the second floor with her father and the rest of the team where her reactions, if any, would be observed and recorded. Everything was filmed and taped. One of the investigators showed off his skill as a glove puppeteer to Marta, while Silvia was just given a glove puppet to hold. Marta suddenly snatched the puppet and threw it at the puppeteer and at the same time Silvia threw her puppet at an investigator. A light was repeatedly shone into Marta's eyes and Silvia blinked rapidly as if dazzled. With her legs crossed Marta's left leg kicked each time her patella reflex was tested with sharp taps with a reflex hammer, and Silvia's left leg jerked so much that her father had to steady her. When Marta sniffed strong perfumes Silvia put her hand over her nose. They were each asked to arrange several coloured discs in whatever order they liked and they each made the same pattern. They were then asked to arrange a set of pictures numbered one to six. Marta's sequence was 4, 3, 1, 2, 5, 6. and Silvia's sequence was 3, 4, 1, 2, 5, 6. Only the '4.3' and '3.4' pairs were different.

United in telesomatic murderous intent

The following case presents an extreme example of telesomatic telepathy that, hopefully, will remain unique. In this case the telesomatic communication was not one resulting in mirrored bodily trauma, but one of a telesomatic acting out that resulted in a violent murder. The murder and subsequent trial took place in Romania in 1993, and Playfair happened to come across a short summary of the case some years later. He obtained a copy of the Romanian newspaper that had reported on the case and had it translated by a Romanian-speaking colleague. Through his colleague he then managed to contact the paper's editor, who remembered the case and could vouch for the reporter, Dan Gardescu, who had since emigrated to America.

Identical twins Romulus and Remus Cozma were born in 1962, and according to their mother they closely mirrored each other's illnesses and injuries throughout their lives. To give one example, after they had left home and were living in towns some 500 miles apart, Romulus broke his right leg

in a fall while climbing, and Remus simultaneously broke his right leg in the same place when suddenly falling downstairs.

In 1987 they each fell in love, and in each case the woman's name was Monica. Remus and his Monica married, but the relationship soon turned into a tumultuous one of fights, yelling and shouting at each other, with Monica apparently becoming a very accomplished screamer. By contrast, Romulus and his Monica did not marry but lived together in a rented flat in contented harmony. One evening as a rather drunk Remus was engaged in another noisy row with Monica, he seized her by the throat and tried to strangle her. A violent struggle ensued in which Monica managed to grab a knife and tried to stab him, but Remus wrestled the knife from her and stabbed her twelve times before she died from her wounds. Remus then went to the police station to confess to her murder. Next day the police telephoned his mother with news of his arrest for murder. She, in turn, tried to telephone Romulus, only to be informed by a very puzzled landlady who answered her call that something very odd must have happened to Romulus, 'because two policemen came this morning and took him away'.

It later transpired that during the previous evening Romulus and Monica had gone to see a film at the local cinema. Afterwards, as it was a nice evening, they decided to take a stroll in a local park before eventually sitting together on a park bench. Suddenly, without any apparent provocation Romulus turned, grabbed Monica by the throat and after a violent struggle strangled her to death. Later investigation indicated that he did this at about the same time that Remus was trying to strangle his Monica. During Romulus's trial for murder, no motive was ever established. All that a distraught Romulus had said to the police when he was arrested was, 'I don't know why I strangled her. I felt impelled by an invisible force and I couldn't resist it'.

Discussion

Assuming that each of these cases occurred as described, the first question must be whether the two sets of closely synchronised experiences are examples of chance correlation, or examples of a causal telesomatic telepathy correlation.

Chance correlation

The working hypothesis of mainstream psychology and the neurosciences is that telepathic communication cannot occur, because communication between two or more people requires involvement of our senses, as in seeing and waving to each other, or shouting to catch someone's attention, or talking to each other. If there is no sensory system interaction then no communication can occur. Apparent examples of telepathy, including telesomatic telepathy must, therefore, be chance correlations of experiences. Given the simultaneity of these paired experiences this explanation would seem to lack credibility.

Causal correlation

The working hypothesis of parapsychology is that there exists a genuine category of experiences, termed Extrasensory Perception (ESP), such as telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, that are truly anomalous in that they cannot be accounted for by any theory based on sensory information only. Whatever the unsolved nature of the brain-*mind* relationship may be, *mental* properties are obviously different in kind to brain properties. The bioelectrical activity of the brain remains within the brain and is too weak to affect anything outside, whereas the mind operates in a different mental reality in which ESP phenomena, such as telepathy can, and dos, occur.

A possible explanation

Accepting telesomatic telepathy as a fact, it is proposed that there is a possible explanation for what occurs in the non-injured twin's body as a mirror of what has happened to the body of the injured twin, based on normal neuropsychology. This will be discussed in terms of what is termed 'bottom up' causation and 'top down' causation.

'Bottom up' causation

In everyday life we receive new information about our body, such as feeling pain when we stub our toe, after impulses generated by the damaged tissues stream through the sensory nerves into the spinal cord and then enter the brain, to end in the sensory cortex and pain centres of the brain. Their arrival stimulates activity in the brain's nerve cells, or neurons, that locate where the

injury has occurred, and this brain activity is somehow converted into our conscious sensation of acute pain in our toe. This endless stream of sensory information pouring into the brain creates our conscious sense of ‘body image’ - indicating what our body is feeling, what position it is in, where it is in space, and how it is moving in response to what we wish to do. Continuously updated by this sensory feedback from the body’s sensory nerve endings. our mental body image and our physical body are in complete accord.

‘Top down’ causation

This is the reverse sequence of events. It occurs when we mentally decide to do something, and this mental decision tells the brain what we want to do and the brain, in turn, sends instructions to our muscles so that our bodies can perform the desired activity, receiving sensory feedback as to what the body is doing, and correcting as necessary. The two sources, mental and physical, act back upon each other in a continuous feedback loop.

Two reflex brain centres

There are two nonconscious brain centres involved in this possible explanation of telesomatic telepathy. One is the vasomotor centre in the brain stem. Its function is to maintain adequate blood pressure, and it does this by controlling the diameter of all the blood vessels, both arteries and veins, down to the capillary network in the tissues. If blood pressure falls, the vasomotor centre automatically constricts the blood vessels to increase it again. By selectively varying blood vessel diameter the vasomotor centre can increase or decrease local blood flow according to tissue need, as in exercise or when responding to tissue injury. The other centre is the highly sensitive vestibular system situated in the inner ear. This controls the balance of the body through righting reflexes, automatically correcting body posture and momentum during activity to remain within the body’s centre of balance. When this centre starts to fall outside the body’s stability it automatically tries to correct balance, as in correcting for a sudden stumble.

Both centres respond to our mental image of our body and its movements, as in everyday circumstances the physical body and our body image mirror each other, so these two brain centres will be receiving

confirmatory information from body and mind. If the mental body image is suddenly incorrect, then these centres will reflexly react *as if* the new, hallucinatory, body image is correct. If, for example, this involves feelings of pain and tissue injury the vasomotor centre will alter its local blood vessel control in response. This can be demonstrated when someone is under hypnotic suggestion. If the hypnotist touches their skin with a pencil while telling them that it is a red hot iron, the vasomotor centre will react to the intense mental imagery of receiving a burn *as if* the person has received a skin burn. A localised blister will form as the capillaries under the pencil-tapped skin fill with blood and their walls become porous, allowing blood plasma to leak into the tissues. If, instead, the hypnotist says that their left leg and foot below the knee are freezing cold, the limb will blanch as the blood vessels contract to preserve body heat. To take another example that the hypnotist is not likely to demonstrate unless under very safe conditions, if the hypnotised body image is one of suddenly falling over, then the vestibular system will react reflexly *as if* that mental imagery corresponds to the actual situation, overwhelming normal control of the standing position and throwing the person off balance.

Telesomatic Telepathy

We can now consider whether this information allows us to formulate a possible explanation of the telesomatic reactions in the non-injured twin. Under the heading ‘One mind, two bodies’, Playfair proposes that identical twins who share telepathic experiences share one mind. Physically, like everyone else, they live in separate worlds and have different experiences, but mentally they remain a unity. To see how this ‘bottom up/top down’ approach helps us to understand what happens during telesomatic telepathy, let us take the case of twins Nettie Porter and Nita Hurst.

Nettie Porter

In 1975 Nettie is involved in a car accident in which she suffers a sudden impact injury to her left side and left leg, resulting in acute pain and a rapid

onset of widespread bruising. Her *pain*, which is a *consciously experienced mental sensation*, is caused by the sensory areas of the brain receiving 'bottom up' streams of impulses from the damaged tissue pain receptors. Her bruising is caused by blood leaking from the damaged capillary vessels, together with a temporary relaxation of vasomotor constrictor control of the blood vessels underlying the damaged areas, as the area fills with blood. Her new body image of painful injury matches the extent of her tissue injury.

Nita Hurst

Nita is a hospital worker and is working in a safe, normal environment. She suddenly experiences acute pains along her left side and down her left leg as Nettie's left-sided pain telepathically enters her mind and displaces her everyday body image with one filled with acute left-sided pain. Her vasomotor centre reacts to this new body image of pain and distress *as if* her left side had been traumatised by rapidly relaxing the superficial capillary bed underlying the painful area. The capillaries, with their relaxed and increasingly porous walls, fill and expand with incoming blood, and this starts oozing into the tissues just under the skin, creating the spreading area of apparent bruising that Nita and the hospital matron see.

Similarly, this 'bottom up' causation in the injured twin to 'top down' telepathically shared mental pain and imagery in the mind of the non-injured twin explains the occurrence of simultaneous injuries because it displaces the correct body image. When, for example, one twin falls and breaks a leg or twists an ankle, the intense mental imagery of alarm experienced by the twin at the moment of losing balance and falling floods the mind of the non-injured twin, replacing the previously stable mental imagery of normal bodily balance. This sudden and alarming change of stable body image to one of falling initiates fast-acting vestibular righting reflexes to try and correct this false, hallucinatory, body imagery. But these righting reflexes are completely inappropriate to what the body is actually doing, causing that twin to suddenly lose their balance. If descending steps or stairs, as was Remus at the time when Romulus was breaking his leg, those reflexes will mirror what is happening in their twin with a high likelihood of breaking the same bone. Alternatively, if the non-injured twin is walking they will suddenly trip and fall.

Support for this explanation comes from Playfair's report of a twin

who, while sitting safely at home, experienced a sudden sense of falling through space at the same moment as his twin suffered a fall while mountain climbing. At the time he thought it was a frightening giddy turn. In the unfortunate case of the Crominski twins, such was the sudden, overwhelming, sensation of painful chest crushing and inability to breathe that Helen experienced at the moment of waking that the intensity of her twin driven, top down imagery of crushing chest pain, fatally inhibited her cardiac and respiratory centres, resulting in her untimely death on the way to hospital.

A wider telepathic twin experience

The previously quoted examples illustrate twin telepathy in its more extreme form. Playfair also includes less extreme accounts which are probably more the telepathic norm. For example, Jill, a non-identical twin in this case, from Crane, Indiana, experienced a sudden pain in her left arm that hurt badly in three separate places without any apparent cause. Later, her mother told her that her twin brother, with whom she had a very close bond, had been injured in an accident at work. Jill interrupted her mother to say, 'He broke his arm in three places, right?' - anticipating, correctly, what her mother was about to say. Playfair quotes many examples of twin communication that, for those involved, are just normal experiences. A mother of identical twins, one of whom suffers from epileptic fits, told Playfair that the other twin would say to her 'Mom, she's going to have a seizure'. This could be up to several minutes before the seizure occurs. When her mother asks how she could possibly know, she replied, 'It's no big deal. I just know'. Sometimes twins sitting exams write identical answers and make the same mistakes, even when in separate rooms. In one example, teachers were so convinced that a pair of identical twins were cheating that they arranged for them to sit a paper in separate rooms. One twin, much to the exasperation of the supervising teacher, refused to start answering the questions as he kept saying that he was not yet ready. Then he suddenly started to write and the teacher noted the time that he started. Later, they found out that the other twin had been subject to a delay in receiving his exam paper. As soon as he received it they both started to write at the same time. When their papers were marked their answers, in identical handwriting with identical mistakes, were the same.

Conclusion

The cases quoted at the beginning of this chapter indicate that for some identical twins telesomatic telepathy is a genuine phenomenon. The proposed explanation is that the mental distress and pain suffered by the injured twin is caused by pain impulses flooding in from the injured tissues to their brain and then into their mind. This distressed body image then telepathically floods the mind of the non-injured twin, displacing their correct body image and creating a hallucinatory one. The vasomotor centre reflexly responds to this painful imagery *as if* their body has been injured, resulting in apparent bruising. As for balance control, if one twin is falling this sudden, frightening, unbalanced body image in the falling twin floods the mind of the non-falling twin, automatically activating a set of righting reflexes to correct the non existent fall, causing them to fall and injure themselves. At present this proposed explanation is an unproved hypothesis, but it seems to fit the facts. A possible laboratory test would be for one twin to spin round to the point of losing their balance when they stop as the world seems to spin round them and see if their twin suddenly feels giddy.

References

Playfair, G, L. (2012). *Twin Telepathy.* 3rd ed. White Crow Books, Guildford, UK.

Vanderbilt, G., Furness, T. (1959). *Double Exposure: A Twin Autobiography.* Frederick Muller, London.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Sir Peter Masefield's reported flight with the ghost of Lieutenant Desmond Arthur

For many people, the most likely sources of information concerning experiences described as paranormal are collections of cases, usually summarised, presented in books where the author assures the reader that they have carefully checked their sources. Less frequent are autobiographical accounts where the experience is recounted in full and has been published, as in this case, in a reputable, non paranormal, journal. The reader has to balance the trustworthiness of that account against their assessment of the social standing, perceived probity, and professional reputation of the author. In this case there would seem no reason to question the authenticity of the account, as the author was a person of considerable professional and social standing who ran the risk of public ridicule.

Sir Peter Masefield

Sir Peter Masefield (1914–2006), was a cousin of the writer and poet laureate John Masefield (1878-1967). He was an experienced pilot, aircraft designer, aviation journalist and expert on aviation history. Unable to join the RAF as a pilot through a slight sight defect, he elected to fly with the US Army Air Force in B-17 'Flying Fortress' bombing raids over Germany during the Second World War. He combined his role as a journalist with acting as co-pilot or gunner when necessary. After the war, in the late 1940s and 1950s, he was a major figure in the development of British civil aviation, bringing new aircraft into service, expanding airport capacity and increasing the number of flight destinations. He became Chief Executive of British European Airways before the eventual formation of British Airways; and Chairman of the British Airports Authority, formed to run Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted in England, and Prestwick in Scotland. He was chair of many important government committees, was on the board of many leading societies, and was awarded two honorary degrees. Online obituaries and his entry in Wikipedia bear testament to his important contribution to post-war aviation development in the UK. He travelled widely on behalf of British aviation and was devoted

to his two seater de Havilland Chipmunk ‘Tango Mike’ in which he flew everywhere.

Masefield's paranormal experience

In the 21 December 1972 issue of the reputable journal *Flight International*, under the heading ‘The Montrose Ghost’, Masefield published a detailed account of an astonishing paranormal experience that had apparently occurred nine years earlier. He said that when flying south over the then ex-WW2 disused Montrose airfield on the east coast of Scotland on the morning of 27 May 1963, he was accompanied by the materialised spirit of a certain Lieutenant Desmond Arthur who sat in the rear seat. He and Desmond Arthur’s spirit then witnessed an aerial re-enactment of the moment that Lt. Arthur’s BE2a biplane had broken up in midair over Montrose airfield, exactly fifty years earlier on 27 May 1913, and saw him fall out of the cockpit to his death. While witnessing the break-up of Lt. Arthur’s biplane, Masefield said that his mysterious passenger gave a ‘shrill, despairing wail’ and disappeared. The following is a slightly abridged summary of his experience as described in the 1972 article.

Masefield’s encounter with Lt. Arthur and his BE2a Biplane

Masefield opens his account by saying that, ‘although they occurred almost 20 years ago, and some of them 50 years before that, the events which I now relate are as clear to me as if they had happened yesterday. One of the significant dates – Monday, 27 May 1963 – is written down in my flying log book. The strangest entry I have ever made, or ever hoped to make'. On Saturday, 25 May 1963, aged 49, he had flown up from Shoreham, West Sussex, to Dalcross airfield, Scotland, in ‘Tango Mike’ to stay for the weekend at Nairn near Inverness. He had been invited to give a talk on early aviation history to local aeronautical enthusiasts, including members of the nearby Kinross and Lossiemouth Air Stations. After the talk on Sunday, given at the then Station Hotel, Inverness, most of the audience, including some elderly ex-RAF members who had been stationed at Montrose airfield during WW1, stayed on for evening dinner and then gathered round the lounge fire to chat and reminisce.

Talk turned back to events at Montrose airfield in 1913, when Lt.

Desmond Arthur, a pilot from Southern Ireland who had recently joined the newly formed Royal Flying Corp (RFC), suffered a fatal flying accident when, on 27 May 1913, his BE2a biplane broke up in midair over Montrose. The initial inquiry by the Royal Aero Club Accident Investigation Committee found that an unauthorised poor repair to a broken outer spar of the starboard (right) upper wing was to blame. The outer section had suddenly folded up, causing the whole wing to collapse. Three years later in August 1916 an Interim Report from an official inquiry into flying accidents said that Lt. Arthur was to blame for the crash, but the Final Report published in December 1916 exonerated him, in full agreement with the Royal Aero Club's original finding that a poor wing repair had been the cause.

During the four months between the Interim Report and Final Report there were many alleged sightings at Montrose airfield of a ghost dressed in full flying kit and helmet, being seen outside and inside the Old Mess. This was assumed to be the ghost of Lt. Arthur, unhappy at being blamed for the accident, and it became known as 'The Montrose Ghost' (see 'Historical background' below). Masefield says that as they talked that night in May 1963:

> 'the fire flickered. A wave of sympathy for the reasonable and rational Ghost of Montrose seemed to go round the group. We felt that we understood his keen sense of personal honour and his concern about the aspersions cast by non-flyers on his flying competence.' Then, he says, someone with a Southern Irish accent, sitting near the back of the group whom Masefield did not see, said 'You didn't get it quite right. I used to be in the RFC and I was at Montrose around those times. That aeroplane wasn't a new BE2. I know, in fact, that it was quite an old one. It had been built up in June 1912 from an old Howard Wright biplane because the Royal Aircraft Factory had money available for repairs but none for new aircraft. That particular plane – its number was 205 – wasn't pleasant to fly. It was very nose heavy as its original 60 hp RNV engine had been replaced by a 70 hp Renault.' Thereafter the conversation drifted away to other matters.

Masefield says that he was still thinking about the previous night's conversation as he returned to Dalcross airport next morning, Monday, 27 May 1963, at around 10am to collect 'Tango Mike' for his return journey to

Shoreham. Standing by his plane in clear sunshine while planning his refuelling schedule, he says that he was joined silently by ‘a short, slight figure, almost buried in an old leather flying jacket’ who, in a Southern Irish accent that he says he recognised from the night before, said, ‘May I beg a ride? You’re going South I think? If you could drop me off at Farnborough, or better still at Brooklands, I’d be eternally grateful.’ (This referred to Brooklands airfield, near Weybridge, Surrey).

Masefield, feeling glad of the company, agreed. He says that he took his spare headset from a locker and plugged it into the intercom and put it on the back seat so that they could chat during the journey. He then climbed into the cockpit with his passenger behind him and closed the canopy. They first flew south-easterly towards the North Sea for some 83 miles, before turning south near Aberdeen to fly roughly parallel to the eastern coastline at around 2,500 ft. Ahead of them lay Montrose, and Masefield used the intercom to say, ‘there’s Montrose that we were speaking about yesterday evening. We’ll take a look at the old aerodrome there by the seashore.’ His passenger made no reply, but Masefield says that he could see through his rear mirror that he was looking very intently over the side. As they approached Montrose airfield a long dark cloud lay inland parallel to them, and as they flew alongside it on the seaward side in clear air, there emerged from the cloud some way ahead of them ‘the drab form of an angular biplane with a wide gap between its wings and two skids, like hockey sticks, in front of its wheels. Well behind the wings in the shallow fuselage I could see the hunched, helmeted, begoggled, figure of the pilot. I can still remember it vividly to this day. It was a BE2.’

They soon drew level with the BE2 at about 200ft (60 m) from its port wings, when at the same moment:

> ‘it turned a little towards us and the nose went down into a steepish turn. And then, with a horrifying suddenness, like a slow-motion silent film, the outer 12 inches or so of the top starboard wing which was inclined towards us in the bank, folded upwards with a sickening abruptness. I watched with dismay as the whole of the rest of that top wing collapsed. I could see the yellow interplane struts whirling like matchsticks in the wind. The nose reared up and then dropped with a jerk. With a cold shudder rising up my back I saw the pilot fall with flailing arms from his open seat behind the wings. He and the twirling pieces of wreckage

> disappeared beneath the Chipmunk's nose. At the same instant in my headset there came a long shrill, despairing wail such as I never hope to hear again. I turned, horror-stricken, to my companion behind. There was no one there. I made a shaky landing on the old Montrose aerodrome alongside the golf links. I taxied shivering cold to the line of old hangars against the road. I peered, incredulous, into the back seat. It was completely empty. The harness was still secured. The headset lay neatly on the seat cushion, plugged in, its switches off.'

Nobody on the ground had heard or seen an old biplane or its pilot falling from the sky. All they had heard and seen was Masefield's Chipmunk flying from the north towards and over them before banking and turning back to land in a hurry. There was no sign of a biplane crash or the fallen body of a pilot on the disused flat open airfield. Despite the warm sunny day Masefield said that he was now feeling cold and ill with shock. He then bought six gallons of petrol before getting back into his Chipmunk to continue his three hour flight south to land at Brooklands, where he taxied up to the old Flying School Buildings in remembrance of Lt Arthur. Later that evening when back home,

> 'I stood in the warm evening sunshine and wondered whether I had imagined it all. I pulled out my log book and began to fill it in – to enter, or not enter, a passenger at take-off who had never landed. The date I inscribed was May 27, 1963. I later confirmed it as exactly 50 years to the day from that May 27, 1913, at Montrose whose events were recorded in detail among the papers of the Accidents Committee of the Royal Aero Club.'(ibid. pp 900-902).

The importance attributed to Masefield's published experience can be judged by a speech made by Dr Dan Paton, Curator of the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre, at Lt. Arthur's 2013 memorial ceremony. During his speech Paton said that 'circumstances point to the existence, if that is the word, of many ghostly figures at Montrose, but what firmly re-established Desmond Arthur as the Montrose ghost was an article by Sir Peter Masefield, the aviation journalist and former chairman of the British Airports Authority, in *Flight International* in December 1972, by which time RAF Montrose had closed. In the article Masefield repeated the original story of Lt Arthur's

death and the subsequent appearance of his spirit at Montrose but with an important new twist.' He then goes on to summarise Masefield's account of his experience while flying south and over Montrose, as given here.

Historical background

The small, east coast town and port of Montrose in the county of Angus, Scotland, lies roughly midway between Aberdeen, some thirty four miles to the north, and Dundee to the south. In early 1913 an area of land known as Upper Dysart, situated four miles south of Montrose town and some four miles inland from the long stretch of sandy shore known as Lunar Bay, was opened as the first military operational base in Britain to train pilots for the newly formed RFC. Known as Montrose Air Field, its aircraft were parked at Upper Dysart while pilots and ground staff were billeted at nearby Panmure Barracks, Montrose (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Aerial view showing Upper Dysart and Broomfield. Reproduced by kind permission. Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre.

For various reasons it was decided that Upper Dysart was not satisfactory, so on 1 January 1914, the squadron and the name moved from Upper Dysart to a large permanent site at Broomfield Farm, two miles north of Montrose town, where permanent hangars, workshops and staff quarters were erected. It was renamed RAF Montrose in June, 1918, and remained in continuous operation until it was decommissioned in 1952. Thereafter it was deserted until the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre was opened in 1983, to celebrate its vital role in training pilots throughout its history, including both World Wars.

Some of the first aeroplanes stationed at Upper Dysart were BE2a

biplanes (Figure 4) designed by Geoffrey de Havilland (1882-1965) and built by the Royal Aircraft Factory (RAC), Farnborough. With a top speed of some 70 mph (116 km/hr) the BE2a was welcomed by pilots as a safe and stable biplane. The twin parallel wings were constructed from a flat framework of wooden spars enclosed in tough fabric and connected to each other by two pairs of vertical struts and diagonal tension wires. Because of their large surface area the wings were fragile structures and easily damaged**.**

Lieutenant Desmond Arthur's fatal crash

Slightly built twenty nine year old Lt. Desmond Arthur from County Clare, Southern Ireland, was recognised as a first-rate flier and very experienced pilot. In early 1913 he travelled to England to join the RFC. Initially stationed at Brooklands airfield, Surrey, he was assigned to No 2 squadron of BE2a biplanes, stationed at Montrose airfield, Upper Dysart, where he arrived from Farnborough on the 17th April 1913. The biplane BE2a No.205 had been flown up from Farnborough to Montrose a few days earlier. During its short life it had had a rather chequered flying history, with several accidents and repairs to its wings, plus a new 70hp engine, before arriving at Montrose without mishap. Since then, it had been flown daily and had performed well without further problems. According to the Wikipedia entry on Desmond Arthur (retrieved April 2016):

> 'At around 7:30am on Tuesday 27 May 1913 Arthur's BE2 biplane No.205 collapsed without warning while flying over Montrose during a routine training flight from Upper Dysart to Lunar Bay Arthur had begun to descend when, at 2500 feet, the right wing of the aircraft snapped off and it plunged to the ground. Arthur was thrown from the aircraft and died instantly. He was found 160 yards away from his machine.'

Besides being the first fatal accident for a Montrose airfield pilot, this disaster came as a huge shock because the BE2a, although often constructed from parts salvaged from other very similar biplanes, was considered to be a well-designed aircraft. As mentioned earlier the Royal Aero Club's Accident Investigation Committee concluded in its June, 1913 report that the cause of the crash was an unauthorised shoddy repair done at Farnborough to an outer wooden wing spar and then re-covered with fabric; so the problem was not a design fault. In August 1916 an official Interim Report blamed Lt. Arthur for

the crash. This led to an outcry by RFC personnel on his behalf, until the Final Report in December exonerated him from all blame.

Reports of a ghost at Montrose

During the four months between the Interim and Final Report, stories of ghostly appearances at Montrose Airfield suddenly commenced. Major Cyril Foggin (aged 21), a senior flight instructor, said that on several occasions in the evenings he had seen a figure in full flying kit, sometimes wearing his helmet and sometimes swinging it, walking in front of him towards the door of what was known as the Old Mess of No 2 squadron, before disappearing (the Old Mess was used by officers only, not trainee pilots). He also once saw this figure in the hall of the Old Mess. Not believing in ghosts, he thought he was hallucinating through sheer stress and fatigue. Then stories of the Commanding Officer and other flying instructors saying they had seen this ghostly figure started to circulate. Two officers said that they had woken up to see this apparition dressed in full flying kit, sitting in a chair near the hut's fire, reading papers, but when they called out he just disappeared. Guards said that they had repeatedly challenged a figure in full flying kit which disappeared as they watched, leaving them terrified. Charles. G. Gray, founding editor of *The Aeroplane,* who had met Lt. Arthur at Farnborough, suggested that the ghost was probably his unquiet spirit, haunting the Old Mess in protest at the Committee of Inquiry's Interim verdict. Reported sightings dropped away after the findings of the Committee of Inquiry's Final Report redressing this injustice were published. His final appearance was said to have occurred at Christmas when Major Foggin and two fellow officers said that they saw the fully kitted figure sitting in front of the fire reading some papers, and then throwing them onto the fire and disappearing. However, both the online *Scotsman* and Wikipedia entries say that there was a claimed final sighting of him on 17 January 1917.

Thereafter sightings of ghosts at Montrose airfield almost ceased, despite the ever growing number of fatal crashes during World War One training, and an increase in trainee pilot graves at nearby Sleepyhillock cemetery, where Lt. Arthur is buried. RAF Montrose ghost sighting stories

commenced again at the start of the Second World War when, in 1940, a night-flying Hurricane fighter pilot sent up to pursue a Heinkel bomber is said to have twice aborted landing because he, but no one else watching his descent, saw an old biplane on the runway right in front of him.

Assessing Masefield's probity

Given Masefield's pre-eminence in post-war British aviation, it seems that the editors of *Flight International* accepted his story as a true account of a very strange experience on the basis that, as there was no reason to expose himself to possible ridicule if it was not true, then it must be true. Later correspondence in the journal referred to his article with further stories of Montrose ghosts, but no one questioned the authenticity of his story.

A re-examination of Masefield's account

As Masefield's visit to Inverness to give a talk on early aviation history in the Station Hotel has not been challenged, there seems no reason to doubt that it occurred. He returned to Dalcross airport on a sunny Monday morning, 27 May 1963, to pick up his de Havilland Chipmunk for the flight home, flew south-easterly towards Aberdeen, and then southward along the coast over Montrose airfield, and onwards toward Dundee. As described, his unusual experience falls into two parts: meeting the mysterious backseat passenger who suddenly disappeared, and seeing a re-enactment of the aerial collapse of Lt Arthur's BE2a biplane and his body falling out of the cockpit.

The claimed mysterious passenger

Masefield says that the person who spoke with the soft southern Irish accent at the meeting, whom he did not see, and the 'short, slight figure almost buried in an old leather jacket' who appeared silently alongside him at Dalcross next morning in bright sunlight, asking for a lift back to Brooklands aerodrome in the same Southern Irish accent, were one and the same. He was Lt. Arthur's fully materialised ghost or spirit, who had, presumably, materialised next to someone the night before after dinner.

The problem

But even assuming that post-mortem spirits are able to materialise as one of a

group sitting round the fire before disappearing again, and then appear fully clothed in bright sunshine to ask Masefield, in this case, for a lift to Brooklands, this particular materialisation makes no sense at all from the point of view of Lt Arthur's spirit. Once his honour as a flier had been publicly satisfied in December, 1916, he had ceased to haunt the Old Mess and sleeping quarters of Montrose airfield, two miles north of Montrose, which he never knew in life as he had been stationed at Upper Dysart well before the move, and never returned.

There seems no reason why he would wish to return some fifty years later as a materialised apparition to sit, as implied, at the back of that evening meeting, to de-materialise after the meeting (did he attend the dinner as well?), and then re-materialise to meet Masefield beside his plane at Dalcross, travel for an hour or so as a backseat passenger, watch a re-enactment of the fatal breakup of his BE2a biplane, see his body plunge to its death, then wail with despair and dematerialise again.

This was not even a reliving of his actual experience on 27 May 1913, because his memory would have been of seeing the right upper wing break up, the sensation of the plane turning over, being thrown out and falling to his death. Why would his spirit wish to create a new and completely unnecessary traumatic observational experience for itself some fifty years later? The unseen person with the Irish accent who Masefield said had spoken at the meeting did not identify himself as Lt. Arthur, nor as someone who had piloted that particular biplane. He referred to himself only as someone who had been in the RFC, knew about the construction of BE2a No 205 and 'had been at Montrose around those times.' If this person had been at the meeting, he sounds more like an Irish mechanic who had been stationed at Montrose and worked on the biplanes.

The claimed aerial re-enactment

All reports are agreed that Lt Desmond Arthur, piloting BE2, No 205, had taken off from Upper Dysart airfield on a routine training flight, and at the time of the accident at 7:30am had started to make a circling descent when, at about 2,500 feet (760m), the outer section of the right upper wing of his aircraft was observed to tear loose, causing the whole wing to collapse. The biplane then spiralled downwards to plunge into the ground near Lunar Bay railway station. Lt Arthur was thrown out of the aircraft and hit the ground

some 160 yards from the wreck of the biplane, dying immediately from his injuries. Figure 2 shows the location of the crash site as just over 4 miles south of Montrose town and 6-7 miles south of the then non-existent Montrose airfield.

Figure 2. Aerial view showing Lunar Bay area crash site. Reproduced by kind permission,Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre.

According to Masefield's account he and his mysterious passenger had just crossed the North Esk estuary, some 2 miles north of the deserted Montrose airfield, when the biplane emerged to their right from an inland bank of cloud a little way ahead of them, and was flying south as they caught up with it. As the two aircraft flew together over Montrose airfield they saw the right wing of the biplane fold up, the nose first rear up then plunge down, and then saw the pilot thrown out of the plane just before the wreckage fell below the nose of the Chipmunk. This whole scene is described as it would look have looked to an onlooker flying alongside.

But as far as being a true re-enactment in the sense of occurring in the same air space at the same height at the same time and over the same area as 50 years earlier, it is completely inaccurate. Lt Arthur's fatal accident took place at 7:30 a.m., some 4-5 hours earlier than Masefield's experience, and over Lunar Bay, 6-7 miles south from Montrose airfield, where his biplane and his body crashed near the local Lunar Bay railway station. Lt Arthur was not reported as flying anywhere near North Esk estuary, 8-9 miles north of Lunar Bay, that morning prior to the accident, so he could not have emerged from an inland bank of cloud as Masefield claims (in his online technical account, Paul Hare says that it was a cloudless morning). His description of

the actual break-up is accurate because that is how it is described in official reports, but as Lt. Arthur did not fall onto Montrose airfield, which was still farmland in 1913, this could not have been part of the re-enactment.

Does Masefield's autobiography confirm his experience?

There is no hint in his very detailed autobiography (Masefield & Gunston, 2002) that Masefield had any interest in the paranormal, had ever had a paranormal experience, or any desire to write fiction. If his dramatic experience had happened as recounted, and had left such an enduring emotional effect that he decided to write an account of it nine years later and submit it to *Flight International*, it is rather surprising that he makes no mention of it in his autobiography where, as he does for other years, he details numerous, almost weekly, diary events for 1963. Yet despite contributing that article about his 1963 experience to *Flight International* in 1972 (which also receives no mention), neither his visit to Nairn to give that talk, nor reference to Lt Arthur, or even RAF Montrose itself, with all its impressive history and vital role in pilot training during two world wars, appear in the index or receive a single mention throughout the text. His only other published book was a detailed technical inquiry into the reasons for the fatal crash of the giant R101 airship on 5 October 1930, killing 48 of the 54 people on board.

Was it a true account of a paranormal experience?

Unless some independent corroboration of Masefield's account comes to light, the answer to the question would seem to be 'No'. For some unknown reason it seems that Masefield decided to compose a detailed and entirely imaginary experience as if it was an experienced fact, date it to 27 May 1963, fifty years after Lt Arthur's death, and then submit it in 1972 for publication in *Flight International.* This all seems completely at odds with his professional and technical interests. The fact that Sir Peter Masefield was such a very unlikely person to make up such a story is what gives his account such persuasive authenticity. This was probably the reason why it was accepted by the editors of *Flight International.*

Fact or Fiction: does it really matter?

Does it really matter whether Masefield, or anyone else for that matter,

decides to compose a fictitious paranormal experience written to deceive the reader into believing that it must be true? In everyday life when personal affairs are going well the answer may be ‘not very much’. In such circumstances, whether ghosts exist and can even materialise, or whether past events can be relived, can be a topic of light-hearted debate, but when unexpected tragedy raises urgent questions concerning the meaning of life, whether there is life after death, and whether we will meet each other again ‘on the other side’, then it really does matter.

If ghosts and apparitions do exist as independent post-mortem entities that can materialise in their own right to interact with living people, they provide evidence that we survive after bodily death as self-aware selves. The question here is not whether that belief is true, but whether Masefield’s account is a true account of such an experience. Following a review of his account, arguments have been advanced leading to the conclusion that it is not. It appears to be a work of fiction presented as personally experienced fact. Given that there is no evidence, even in his detailed autobiography, that Masefield had any interest in psychic matters including ghosts, the unanswered question is: why?

The problem of veracity

The outcome of this inquiry, as in other cases, highlights the problem of assessing the veracity of any claimed paranormal experience occurring in circumstances where external validation by others is not possible. How can the general reader, who is trying to be open minded as to the existence of paranormal phenomena and its possible implications as to our true nature, know whether the account they are reading is paranormal fact or paranormal fiction? This question has been difficult enough to answer when, as in this case, we have an account from an apparently reputable and trustworthy author of a detailed personal experience that was accepted for publication in a reputable aviation journal. Compilations of claimed paranormal experiences, whether of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, or seeing ghosts as materialised apparitions, imply prior selection by the author(s) of best evidenced cases, and when taken together they convey a cumulative impression that they have demonstrated the existence of the paranormal beyond reasonable doubt.

For many of these accounts this may be so, but the question raised by

this inquiry is this: which accounts of which experiences? This leads to a consideration of cases where what the reader is reading is a subsequent retelling of someone else's published experience. With no other information to hand they are likely to conclude that it really did happen as in the retelling. The following examples concerning Masefield's story make salutary reading, now that we have read the original account.

Subsequent retellings of Masefield's published experience

As publication of Masefield's experience was limited to *Flight International* it does not appear to have received wider coverage at the time, and readers are more likely to come across his case as retold by someone else. The major retelling of Masefield's experience, without even quoting *Flight International* as reference, is by the late American aviation author Martin Caidin in his 1991 book *Ghosts Of The Air: True Stories of Aerial Hauntings.* Caidin assures the reader that his book presents true, doubly checked, accounts of real paranormal aerial experiences that left the experiencers baffled and confused, but absolutely certain that they had occurred as described. Chapter four is devoted to the 'The Phantoms of Montrose'. Lt. Arthur's ghostly appearances during 1916, and further sightings of ghosts and ghostly biplanes at Montrose during the Second World War, receive a very spirited retelling, as does Masefield's experience. This reads almost more convincingly than Masefield's own account through the inclusion of Caidin's interpretive embellishments (these are corrected in brackets).

Caidin retells only half the story, as there is no mention of the reason why Masefield was in Scotland, or even of the materialised presence of Lt. Arthur's ghost as passenger, or even why Masefield was flying to Shoreham. Caidin's account commences by saying: 'Sir Peter Masefield, one of the best-known figures of aviation in the United Kingdom was taking advantage of unexpectedly beautiful spring weather to fly from Dalcross to Shoreham.' We are told that he knew Montrose airfield well and was 'warming to the thought of seeing the field from which he had once flown.' (*Incorrect. Flying solely with the American 8th Airforce based in East Anglia, he never flew from Montrose*). Seeing the deserted runways 'he thought of the tens of thousands of take-offs and landings of the past' (*such thoughts are not mentioned in his account*). Then he sees the BE2 biplane, with the pilot wearing a leather helmet and goggles 'and the flying scarf so popular in ancient flying days'

(*Masefield makes no mention of seeing such a scarf*). ‘At first Masefield wonders if it is a replica BE2 as he knew that enthusiasts were building replicas of old aircraft’ *(Masefield does not mention such wonderings)* ‘but then, to his horror, he sees it break up in a whirl of fragments to crash onto the abandoned Montrose aerodrome.’ (*He does not see the crash, as he says that ‘the wreckage disappeared beneath the Chipmunk’s nose*’). ‘Shaken by what he had seen he lands and shouts at local golfers to come to his aid but for several moments they just stared at Sir Peter. No one had seen the plane crash. Then everyone hurries across the field to the crash site. But there was no wreckage. There was neither a BE-2 nor the crushed remains of any airplane.’(*Masefield makes no mention of meeting astonished golfers who eventually come to his aid and then run to the presumed crash site. He lands near the golf links and then taxies up to the hangars before getting out and asking bystanders if they had seen the biplane crash*). Caidin then says that ‘as Sir Peter Masefield related the specific details of what he has seen from the air; and what he had failed to find on the ground, he repeated that he *had* seen the airplane collapse in flight, *had* seen it crash and *had* seen the dust thrown up on impact” *(This reads as a verbatim quotation, but Masefield says nothing of the sort).*

To the reader these dramatic assertions read as direct quotations taken from Masefield’s account, providing persuasive confirmation that this all happened as Caidin describes. In his account Masefield says that he saw the aerial break up and Lt. Arthur’s body falling out of the biplane as it occurred alongside of him, but saw nothing else once the wreckage had ‘disappeared beneath the Chipmunk’s nose’ as he flew on before circling to come back and land.

Caidin concludes his imaginative retelling by saying that, ‘Later he [Masefield] did some checking. Perhaps there is an explanation for what happened that day. What Masefield witnessed was precisely what is to be read in the findings of the Accidents Investigation Committee of the Royal Aero Club, dated 2 and 10 June 1913. Almost fifty years to the day before Masefield’s flight – on 27 May 1913 – the BE-2 biplane of Lieutenant Desmond L. Arthur folded its upper wing and plummeted to the ground.’ (pp 25-39). This reads as if Masefield discovered this later, but Masefield was an expert on early aviation history, and already knew the story. The important point here is that the reader has no way of knowing that Caidin’s imaginary,

but very persuasive details, are not in the original account. It all reads as definite fact.

Under the heading ‘Masefield and Montrose’, American author Anita Holmes, in her 2010 book *Twidders: Exploration of the Time-Lost Continuum and Travel* (pp 76-77), repeats the same story, quoting Caidin as reference, summarising Caidin’s vivid account, including the ‘flying scarf so popular in ancient flying days’ and the apparently verbatim Masefield quotation that ‘he *had* seen the airplane collapse in flight, *had* seen it crash and *had* seen the dust thrown up on impact.’

How is the reader to know that Caidin’s and Holmes' retellings of Sir Peter Masefield’s experience contain imaginary details and quoted personal thoughts as if they are in the original account that they have not even referenced? Caidin says that everything has been double checked. Holmes presents her many accounts of experiencing the past and future as facts. The most egregious untruth in both accounts is that Masefield said repeatedly that ‘he *had* seen the airplane collapse in flight, *had* seen it crash and *had* seen the dust thrown up on impact.’

In his 1979 book *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*, John Fuller makes an incredibly inaccurate, unreferenced description of what was said to have occurred, by saying that ‘Sir Peter Masefield had reported that he was preparing to land at a small airfield in Britain when an ancient biplane loomed ahead of him, faltered, and then crashed close to the field. When he brought his ship down there was no sign of the ancient plane nor had any mechanic seen the crash. Sir Peter learned later, however, that years before such a plane had crashed at the field in identical circumstances.’ (p. 292).

Conclusion

Masefield appears to have described a purely fictitious experience, and this case should not be included in accounts purporting to contain true cases of materialised ghosts interacting with people, including seeing and reliving of a past event. Why he did so, remains unknown.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr Dan Paton, Curator, Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre and Kevan Dickin, Heritage Centre IT consultant, for their tireless help in

answering my queries and supplying copies of original documents including aerial maps related to the former and present site of Montrose airfield, his fatal accident and subsequent accident investigations.

Originally published in *JSPR* 82,103-115 (April, 2018) as 'Did Sir Peter Masefield fly 'The Montrose Ghost' as passenger? A Re-assessment.'

References

Caidin, M. (1994). *Ghosts of the Air: True Stories of Aerial Hauntings.* New York, Gulde Press.

Desmond Arthur. Wikipedia. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Arthur. Cached

Fuller, J. (1979). *The Airmen Who Would Not Die.* NewYork. Souvenir Press.

Hare, P, R. *The Royal Aircraft Factory BE5.* www.crossandcockade.com/uploads/**BE5**.pd (retrieved 24/5/16 PDF)

Holmes, A. (2010). *Twidders: Exploration of the Time-Lost Continuum and Travel.* Huntsville, AR. Ozark Mountain Publ.

Masefield. P. (1972). The Montrose Ghost. *FLIGHT International (pp900-902) 21 December.*
PDF back copies online https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/

Masefield, P, & Gunston, B. (2002.) *Flight Path: The Autobiography of Sir Peter Masefield.*

Scotsman (22 May, 2013). The Ghost of Montrose air base to be honoured. http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/ghost-of-montrose-air-base-to-be-honoured-1-2940025#ixzz46duHMDe6

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Robert Hambleton-Jones encounters an apparition in Glasgow Airport

In her 2013 book entitled *Things You Can Do When You are Dead: True Accounts of After Death Communication*, Tricia Robertson includes a case under the heading of 'Captain Bob' which she and the late Professor Archie Roy investigated personally (pp 6-11). It concerns Captain Robert Hambleton-Jones, who apparently met and talked with a post-mortem apparition of his friend Captain Robert McLeod in the concourse of Glasgow airport. It was so lifelike a meeting that at the time Hambleton-Jones naturally assumed he had met his friend in person. The question is whether Robertson is correct in her assertion that Macleod's post-mortem apparition walked across Glasgow airport concourse one particular afternoon to meet 'Captain Bob' (she uses 'Captain Bob' and 'Jack' for MacLeod as pseudonyms).

This reconsideration of the case is based upon the account as given by Robertson, some additional information from Robertson in response to my inquiries (Robertson, 2016), an interview with Robert Hambleton-Jones and Robertson published in the *Heraldscotland* (1996), an obituary that appeared in the *Stornoway Gazette* (1995), and online information concerning Loganair airline, as it was at the time of the incident.

The circumstances

In the early 1990s Loganair was a small Scottish airline of five aircraft servicing North Scotland, the Western Isles, the Orkneys and Shetland Isles. One of Loganair's pilots was Captain Robert Macleod, in his early 30s, who came from Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. Captain Robert Hambleton-Jones, an ex-Navy fighter pilot in his late 50s from Paisley, had recently retired as a pilot for Loganair. The pair had become good friends during the nine years they had worked together until Hambleton-Jones's retirement. At the time of his unusual experience at Glasgow airport Hambleton-Jones had not seen Macleod since his retirement nine months earlier, as he had been abroad on airline business and had only recently returned to the UK. The following

account is based upon Robertson's presentation of the case following interviews with Hambleton-Jones. with her comments in quotes.

Hambleton-Jones flew into Glasgow airport from Heathrow on Thursday, 15th June 1995, arriving at 2.30pm on a warm, sunny afternoon. He entered the terminal concourse expecting to be picked up by a friend for his journey home to Paisley, some 7 miles west of Glasgow. After putting down his bag he checked his watch, saw that it was about 2.45pm, and stood to one side of the concourse waiting for his friend. He was then pleasantly surprised to see Robert Macleod walking diagonally across the concourse towards him from the direction of the entrance with 'a huge grin on his face', saying words to the effect of 'How's it going, you old b----r?' (p.8). They exchanged a few unremembered commonplaces, then Macleod said, 'Must go, I'm late' and hurried past Hambleton-Jones in the direction of the end check-in counter for Stornoway. Hambleton-Jones then picked up his bag, took a couple of steps towards the entrance, and turned round expecting to see Macleod going through the check-in, but he had already disappeared. He thought it odd that Macleod had not shaken hands as usual but then thought nothing more about it. As his friend never arrived to give him a lift home he eventually caught a bus back to Paisley.

Next day he went to his local pub for a midday drink and a chat, when someone said to him "You must know this man", pointing to an obituary in the *Scotsman* newspaper. To his shock he saw that it was an obituary of Macleod, including a photograph of his face with the unusual gap between his front teeth, and the gold spectacles that always looked too large for his face. According to the obituary Macleod died on Sunday, 11th, June, four days before Hambleton-Jones' encounter on Thursday, 15th June.

After several days of feeling very shaken and confused by this experience Hambleton-Jones took the advice of a friend and contacted Professor Archie Roy, a retired astronomer, and Tricia Robertson, a former physics and maths teacher, two very experienced research members of the Scottish Society for Psychical Research. After he had told them of his experience, Robertson and Roy questioned Hambleton-Jones as to whether he could have mistaken someone else for Macleod. But he was certain that it was Macleod he had met, and Macleod he had talked to, in the concourse at Glasgow airport on that warm, sunny Thursday afternoon. When asked about his own beliefs he said he was an agnostic and had never felt any interest in

stories of ghosts and apparitions as he did not believe in such ‘rubbish’. After talking with Robertson and Roy, Hambleton-Jones telephoned the family and Macleod’s father confirmed details of his son’s illness, loss of weight, admission to hospital and death. Robertson then goes on to provide an extensive summary of Captain Hambleton-Jones’ distinguished RAF flying career, including flying Top Gun, to demonstrate that he was definitely ‘not a man given to fabrication of the truth, ephemeral ideas or flights of fancy’ (p. 9).

During an interview for the *Heraldscotland* published on the 6th March, 1996, nearly nine months after this experience, Hambleton-Jones said to the reporter

> I’m not some kind of crank. I know who I saw and spoke to. He came up to me and said “How’s it going you old bastard?” It was great to see him. We chatted for a couple of minutes, then he said “I must go now”. I picked up my bags and turned round but he had gone. I told Professor Roy what had happened. He said that perhaps I had seen an actor or a lookalike. But Robert and I were captains in the same fleet for nine years and I know I spoke to him four days after he died.

Tricia Robertson’s comment to the same reporter during the same interview was that ‘a post-mortem apparition happens when someone dies unexpectedly. His spirit goes about as normal because he does not believe he is dead. Such events are not that unusual. They happen more often than you would think.’ Discussing his experience with Robertson some nine years later, Hambleton-Jones said that he ‘knew who he bloody well met on that day’ (p. 10).

Despite the story receiving considerable local publicity, no one came forward to confirm that they had been in the concourse at the same time and saw Hambleton-Jones talking to someone who they could see, or talking to someone they could not see. By the time Robertson saw the head of airport security to discuss the case, the concourse videotapes for that day had been erased and reused. On checking flight timetables for Stornoway for the 15th June there was no passenger by that name, but they found that Macleod’s coffin had arrived from Edinburgh airport to be transferred onto a 3.00pm Loganair plane enroute to his home town of Stornoway. At the end of her account Robertson summarises the case (pp 9-10) for concluding that

Hambleton–Jones really had met MacLeod's ('Jack's) post mortem apparition as follows:

> Jack walked diagonally across the concourse, from one set of sliding doors at the entrance grinning all over his face, and made his way to Bob. Jack had an unusual gap between his teeth, which made him highly distinguishable from another person. He also wore gold spectacles that were of an unusual size in that they were very large and almost looked too big for his face. Having come from Edinburgh, a coffin was transported through Glasgow Airport roughly about the same time, certainly on the same day, as the two men met. Remember that Jack died in an Edinburgh hospital two days (sic) earlier. The destination of the coffin was Jack's hometown. Although he had lost all that weight, he would have had no expectation of dying at that time. Bob did not know that his friend had lost weight, or even that he had been poorly.

She adds that 'a good test of a case is the effect the phenomenon has had on the recipient' referring to Hambleton-Jones' distress when telling them about his experience, and quoting his comment to her some nine years later that he knew 'who he bloody well met on that day.' She says that as a consequence of this experience he has had to rethink his model of reality, life and death. Summing up what she thinks would be the sceptic's argument against her certainty that the post-mortem spirit of Macleod really had appeared to Hambleton-Jones as a materialised apparition she says, 'I can hear the sceptic now saying "Oh, he just made a mistake" – but how does the sceptic know that he just made a mistake?'

She goes on to say that as Hambleton-Jones and Macleod's apparition clearly recognised and spoke to each other. The question the reader needs to answer after reading this account is 'Do you think it was a mistake?' If the answer is 'No I don't think it was a mistake' then the reader will have come to the same conclusion as Robertson and Roy, that Hambleton-Jones really did meet Macleod's post-mortem apparition. She ends her account by putting his experience into a wider context of psychical experiences, saying that there are 'thousands of well authenticated, similar occurrences' (p. 11), and since the time that his experience was made public many people have now shared very similar experiences with 'Captain Bob.'

Discussion

Robertson's presentation of Hambleton-Jones' experience as one of seeing, meeting, and talking to Macleod's actual post-mortem spirit in the form of a lifelike apparition is based upon accepting his certainty that he had met his friend in the concourse at around 2:45pm on Friday, 15th June, 1995, and that this is the only credible explanation. The fact that the flight timetables showed that Macleod's coffin was passing through Glasgow airport on its way to Stornoway at the same time is taken as supporting this conclusion. After crossing the concourse and greeting Hambleton-Jones, Macleod's post-mortem spirit had, Robertson concludes, then left him to pass through the end check-in counter to join his coffin on its journey to Stornoway. She bases the sceptic's case for disagreeing with her and Roy's explanation purely on the challenge of mistaken identity, but there seems no reason to doubt that Hambleton-Jones did see and speak to a lifelike apparition of Macleod. In itself, however, this is not sufficient reason to conclude that Macleod's spirit had briefly materialised in the concourse to meet him and then left him to dematerialised again before joining his coffin.

Hallucinatory Waking Dreams

An alternative explanation not considered by Robertson and Roy is that experiences such as seeing an apparition or a ghost are likely to be hallucinatory experiences, being entirely subjective in origin. This would be the explanation put forward by the subset of psychology known as Anomalistic Psychology, that rejects any form of parapsychological explanation for any experience, however unusual (Holt et al 2012; French & Stone, 2014), but is also an alternative explanation that must be taken into account by those who believe that apparitions and ghosts occur in their own right.

Hallucinatory experiences have been defined by the late neurologist Oliver Sacks in his 2012 book *Hallucinations* as 'percepts arising in the absence of any external reality – seeing things or hearing things that are not there' (p.ix). According to various surveys, between 17% to 30% of the population experience an hallucination at sometime during their lives without any evidence of neurological pathology (Irwin & Watt 2007, as quoted by Holt et al. 2012, p. 129). When hallucinations occur, they just happen without any prior warning, usually lasting from a few seconds to about a minute, but

sometimes for much longer, and for many people they are an unexpected and never repeated experience. The term “apparition” implies something insubstantial like a reflection in a window, but during the time of the experience an apparition is perceived as real as the surroundings into which it is seamlessly integrated (Green & McCreery, 1975, p.1). The subjective imagery merges with the surrounding reality in a before-and-after sense of continuity of conscious awareness. A state of background tiredness can be a precipitating factor. As far as the person is concerned, they are certain that they were fully conscious and aware throughout such an experience; it is only when the apparition has suddenly disappeared without trace that a person realises that what they had seen was not part of the everyday world around them.

Green and McCreery (1975), Tyrrell (1953) and Mackenzie (1971, 1983, 1989) quote dozens of examples of people momentarily seeing someone who is dead, or is still alive but physically elsewhere at the time. Similarly, the apparition may be one of seeing an animal, whether a dead pet or sometimes an animal they did not know. Besides apparitions of people and animals, there are many accounts of seeing buildings, roads, fields, trees, gardens and vehicles that disappear after the person looks away and then looks back, or remains there despite looking away but is not there when making a return visit.

According to the literature on apparitions the most likely time to have such an experience is when a person is in a relaxed, restful state of mind. This could, for example, be when performing a repetitive task such as cleaning or ironing, or just before going to sleep or on waking up. In their survey of apparitional experiences Green and McCreery (1975, p.124) found that 18% occurred during unhurried, relaxed walking, and 19% when standing around rather idly in a reverie state of mind. In about 14% of apparitional experiences there is some brief conversation (p.95). Green and McCreery have proposed that what they term “waking dreams” may be the major cause of apparitional experiences with the dream imagery seamlessly intruding into normal daytime wakefulness.

To decide which of these two possible causes – a materialised, post-mortem apparition of Macleod that existed in its own right external to Hambleton-Jones, or a momentary ‘day dream’ of seeing Macleod - may be the most likely explanation for his experience, we need to consider the

context in which that experience occurred, the circumstances surrounding Macleod's illness and death and then, rather speculatively but very relevantly, we need to ask ourselves whether Macleod's post mortem spirit would have had any reason to materialise in the concourse on that sunny June afternoon.

Robert Hambleton-Jones

That he had this apparitional experience four days after Macleod's death seems beyond all reasonable doubt. On that warm Thursday afternoon he was standing in a very familiar concourse in expectation that his friend would soon appear to give him a lift home. As far as we know he was in a relaxed state of mind, as there is no indication in Robertson's account to the contrary. Although he may have had no particular reason to think about Macleod, the concourse probably carried familiar memories of them meeting and crossing the concourse together over the years, and he may have been standing there some nine months later idly remembering them. He did not see Macleod actually enter through the sliding entrance doors. He saw him walking diagonally across the concourse towards him from the direction of the doors. There is no mention of what Macleod was wearing, which is odd. Surely this would have been one of Robertson and Roy's first questions – was he in uniform? He was smiling in greeting, jovially addressed Hambleton-Jones, and according to the description of his experience as given by Hambleton-Jones to the *Heraldscotland* reporter, he does not seem to have received any disturbing impression that Macleod was ill.

As they are his own words it is worth reiterating how he described his encounter to the reporter*:* 'He came up to me and said "How's it going, you old bastard?" It was great to see him. We chatted for a couple of minutes and then he said "I must go now". I picked up my bags and turned round but he wasn't there. He was gone.'" According to Robertson's account Macleod was 'grinning all over his face' (p. 9) when they met. There is no hint from his account to the reporter or in Robertson's description that MacLeod was 'grinning all over his face', that he thought Macleod looked ill or was alarmed at how thin Macleod looked. This seems at complete odds with Robertson's comment that Hambleton-Jones said of his meeting with Macleod that 'he was quite taken aback by his very thin appearance' as he seemed to have lost 'a hellova lot of weight' (p.8). If he had been that taken

aback by the appearance of his friend, it is rather surprising that he did not contact Loganair, either later that same afternoon or next morning, to say that he had met Macleod in the concourse who looked worryingly thin and unwell, and inquire if he was ill.

Robert Macleod

Robert Macleod died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on Sunday, 11th June, four days before Hambleton-Jones' experience, leaving behind his grieving parents, brothers and sisters-in-law. His *In Memoriam* notice was printed in the *Stornoway Gazette* on the same day. Besides being a friend of Hambleton-Jones, we know nothing more about Macleod beyond the fact that during 1995 he was becoming worryingly ill over a period of some six months, and had lost about 3 stone in weight. He was admitted to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary as an inpatient for urgent tests and died soon after admission, aged 35, following a liver biopsy. Given his rapidly declining health and the urgency of admission, the possibility of death would surely have been in everyone's mind, even if no one was saying so; yet for some unexplained reason Robertson says that 'although he had lost all that weight he would have had no expectation of dying at that time.' This is not something that she could possibly have known. The hospital would not have released any information, and after talking to Hambleton-Jones on that one occasion, his family in Stornoway, who were devout Christians, had refused to speak to anyone, including Robertson and Roy (Robertson, 2016, personal communication), concerning Hambleton-Jones' now publicised experience of seeing their son's post-mortem apparition.

Macleod's apparent post-mortem apparition

As it has not yet proved possible to interview post-mortem apparitions as to why they appear and disappear when they do, we can only speculate as to what might have been in the mind of Macleod's spirit after his bodily death. Robertson's assertion that spirits may continue to go around as normal because they do not know they are dead does not apply to MacLeod's death. He was a desperately ill hospital patient and very likely to die, so, if it can be tactfully expressed in this way, his spirit would have known this. His death in

a hospital ward following the onset of a fatal illness is not comparable to a sudden, unexpected death as in a road accident, so it seems very unlikely that his materialised spirit would have been walking across Glasgow airport concourse unaware of the fact that he had died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary four days earlier.

Assuming that Macleod shared his family's strong Christian beliefs, his spirit would have left this life with the expectation of entering into the Heaven of God's good grace. If this was so, what possible reason would his spirit have to appear to Hambleton-Jones as a materialised apparition of his former self walking across the concourse towards the check-in desk to board the Loganair flight home to Stornoway? Why would he wish to give Hambleton-Jones the erroneous impression that he was still alive, let alone be responsible for the ensuing distress his apparitional appearance would cause to his erstwhile friend when he found out that he had been dead for four days? Apart from the distress his apparitional appearance would soon cause to Hambleton-Jones, there is the distress his family would soon experience through subsequent unwanted publicity concerning his apparently apparitional appearance to Hambleton-Jones.

It is worth noting here that to add to their grief it did not even prove to be a story of passing interest. Because Robertson and Roy made public their conclusion that their beloved son and brother had appeared to Hambleton-Jones as an apparition, and he had accepted their conclusion as they were the experts, his family had to endure further distress. Under the heading *Ghosthunters* (a paranormal documentary series by Inca Productions aired on the Discovery Channel during 1996-7) this story about their son's apparent apparitional appearance as a post-mortem spirit not knowing, according to Robertson, that he was dead, was shown in June 1996 under the title of *The Phantom Pilot.* Surely this would have been the very last thing the post-mortem spirit of their son would have wanted his family to endure.

The coffin at Glasgow Airport

The fact that his coffin was passing through the baggage area of Glasgow airport at about the same time that Hambleton-Jones was in the concourse is considered by Robertson and Roy as somehow supporting the idea that this was probably the reason why his spirit was also in the concourse. It was, according to them, hurrying towards the check-in desk to accompany the

coffin back to Stornoway. But if spirits do accompany their coffins it seems more likely that they would join and remain with the coffin from the time their body is placed in it until, perhaps, the end of the funeral service. In support of their supposition Robertson says that 'Bob saw his friend running towards' the end check-in (p. 9). But according to her own account he saw no such thing. He saw Macleod walking towards him from the entrance of the concourse, and when Macleod left him to go behind him towards the check-in desk he was still facing towards the exit as he picked up his bag and walked a couple of steps forward. Macleod had disappeared by the time he turned round, so for Robertson to assume that he had passed invisibly through the check-in desk and was now out of sight is an inference at best.

Regarding this coincidence of coffin and apparition timing, Robertson (p. 10) asks how a sceptic would account for the fact that 'a coffin containing an airline pilot's body' was 'going through the airport at approximately the same time as Bob's encounter: a pilot's coffin being loaded onto a flight heading for Jack's hometown destination.' It doesn't require a sceptic to suggest that this coincidence is easily accounted for by the time required to complete hospital formalities before release of Macleod's body to a funeral director in Edinburgh, the time taken by the family to visit the undertakers, choose a coffin, and then make arrangements for his coffin to be flown from Edinburgh to Glasgow in accordance with Loganair's flight scheduling to Stornoway. It just happened to take four days, and MacLeod's coffin just happened to be passing through Glasgow airport on the same afternoon that Hambleton-Jones was there as were hundreds of other passengers.

Post mortem apparition or a waking dream?

While not denying that post mortem apparitions may exist, and that this possibility might be the most likely explanation in some cases, in the context of the preceding discussion concerning the circumstances in which Hambleton-Jones saw an apparition of Macleod, the circumstances of Macleod's illness and date of death, and the lack of any apparent reason why his post-mortem spirit should wish to materialise in the concourse, it is proposed that this should not be presented as a true example of a post-mortem appearance as no other explanation is possible. Instead, it is proposed that a more likely explanation is that Hambleton-Jones experienced a momentary hallucination, or waking dream, of seeing and speaking to Macleod.

Maybe a rather tired Hambleton-Jones was standing in the warm concourse in a quietly abstracted state of mind in which, for a few seconds, a waking dream, based upon familiar memories of seeing Macleod crossing the concourse towards him, was played out. As this imagery would have merged imperceptibly into his surroundings, and remain with him on his return to normal awareness of the concourse, it would have had all the immediacy of an actual external event. This is why he was so adamant that he had seen Macleod, because in that waking dream he had. The one oddness may not have been of Macleod looking ill, as this may have been a retrospective interpretation after he knew about MacLeod's illness, but that Macleod did not shake hands despite being delighted to see him. We don't know whether Hambleton-Jones stretched out his hand in greeting.

Conclusion

These two possible explanations for Hambleton-Jones' experience: a post-mortem apparition of MacLeod existing in its own right, or a brief daydream of him that merged in with his surroundings, can be no more than speculative as, unlike a film or video, we cannot re-run and watch his apparitional experience as he experienced it before any subsequent interpretation by Robertson and Roy based upon their beliefs. It is proposed here that the most likely explanation is that Robert Hambleton-Jones, while standing still on that warm afternoon, joined the 19% of people in Green and McCreery's (1975) study who experienced a brief hallucination, or 'waking dream' of seeing MacLeod coming across the concourse to greet him that blended seamlessly into his surroundings.

Originally published: *JSPR* 80: 149-157. (July, 2016) as 'Seeing an Apparition at Glasgow Airport: The Robert Macleod and Robert Hambleton-Jones Case Reconsidered'

References

French, C.C., & Stone, A (2014). *Anomalistic Psychology: Exploring Paranormal Belief and Experience.* Houndsmill, Uk. Palgrave Macmillan.

Green, C., & McCreery, C. (1975). *Apparitions.* London. Hamish Hamilton. Heraldscotland (6/3/96) *News item.*

Holt, N,C., Simmonds-Moore,C., Luke, D., French, C,C. (2012). *Anomalistic Psychology*. Basingstoke, UK. Palgrave Macmillan.

Irwin, H., & Watt, C. (2007). *An Introduction to Parapsychology*. (5th ed). Jefferson, NC. McFarland.

Mackenzie, A. (1971). *Apparitions and ghosts.* London. Arthur Barker.

Mackenzie, A. (1983). *Hauntings and apparitions: An investigation of the evidence.* London. Paladin.

Mackenzie, A. (1989). *The seen and the unseen: A study of presences, apparitions and other paranormal phenomena.* London. Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Robertson, T.J. (2013). *Things you can do when you are dead: True accounts of after death communication.* Guildford, UK. White Crow Books.

Robertson, T,J. (2016). *Personal correspondence.*

Sacks, O. (2012). *Hallucinations.* New York, Picador.

Stornoway Gazette. (11/6/95). *In Memoriam.* (available online. See under 'Robert MacLeod obituary')

Tyrell, G.N.M. (1953). *Apparitions.* (2nd ed.). London. Society for Psychical Research

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Locating the address of a stolen harp through long distance map dowsing

In her 2007 book, *Extraordinary Knowing*, the late Dr Elizabeth Mayer describes the loss and return of her daughter's harp following map dowsing of its street location from some 1800 miles (2100 km) away. What, I wonder, would be the effect on a publicly avowed sceptic of all things ESP if this had been their own experience? Would they be able to find a non-ESP explanation for what happened? Let us put ourselves in Dr Mayer's shoes and follow her experience as she recounts it (pp.1-3) to see if we can spot a non-ESP explanation that she must have missed. For herself, Dr Mayer says that her experience 'irrevocably changed my familiar world of science and rational thinking. It changed the way I perceive the world and try to make sense out of it'.

Firstly, who was Dr Mayer? She was an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, taught at UC Medical Centre, San Francisco, and was a Fellow on the Board of the International Consciousness Research Laboratories, Princeton University. As a psychoanalyst, researcher and experienced clinician she had authored over 40 papers, sat on many committees and editorial boards, attended international conferences, and was a respected training and supervising analyst for the American Psychoanalytic Association. Married with two children, she lived in Oakland, San Francisco.

What was it she experienced, when in her mid forties and in the middle of a successful professional career, that literally 'changed everything'? Changed everything to such a degree that it resulted, some 14 years later, in writing her book as a culmination of many interviews and many years of research into the literature on ESP, both as experienced by people and empirical research findings, and the often very acrimonious debate the subject evokes. Let us now follow the sequence of astonishing events as they unfolded in 1991-92.

Stage One

In December 1991, Dr Mayer's eleven year old daughter Meg was in a theatre playing in a Christmas concert. Meg had become a skilled harpist, using not the standard, large, pedal harp but a small, easily carried, and very valuable harp, presumably made for her when she had started to play the harp aged about six. At some time during the concert in Oakland, a large port in the San Francisco Bay Area, she must have left the harp behind the scenes unattended, because when she went to collect it and put it back into its case the harp had been stolen. Two months of police inquiry over Christmas and New Year, together with American Harp Society newsletters, and even a local CBS TV news story, led nowhere. By the end of February 1992, Dr Mayer and family had become resigned to the likelihood that this was just one more unsolved theft among hundreds in the Bay area. At home, a heartbroken Meg had rejected all other proposed harps as 'unplayable' and remained inconsolable.

Stage Two

One day in late February, while discussing her feelings of helpless frustration with a friend and the emotional toll this was taking on her daughter, Dr Mayer was taken aback to hear her friend suggest that, as all else had failed, she had nothing to lose by contacting a dowser to see if he, or she, could locate the harp. Knowing nothing about dowsers beyond a vague picture of them walking around holding forked sticks looking for underground water, Mayer agreed, more out of politeness and a wish not to offend than conviction. As she had no idea how to find a reliable dowser she asked her friend to make enquiries on her behalf. She, in turn, contacted the American Society of Dowsers (ASD) and was given the telephone number of Major Harold McCoy, President of ASD, who lived in Fayetteville, Arkansas, some 1800 miles (2100 km) inland, due east of San Francisco.

Stage Three

Feeling self-conscious and rather embarrassed, but driven by desperation, Dr Mayer telephoned Major McCoy, then aged 61, to say that she had heard he could locate lost objects by dowsing, told him about the circumstances of the stolen harp, and asked if he could locate it.

Stage Four

To her baffled surprise McCoy replied, ‘Give me a second and I’ll tell you if it is still in Oakland’. A few moments later he said, ‘Well, it is still there. Send me a street map of Oakland and I’ll locate it for you’.

At this point we must pause and review the situation. At the time Oakland had a population of some 400,000 people, many of whom were, and are, itinerant passers through. At the time, the city was considered to have a high rate of theft and, of course, consists of hundreds of streets. McCoy, at home in Fayetteville, Arkansas, has received a phone call out of the blue from someone he does not know, about a stolen harp he did not know had been stolen. Yet, with only a brief moment of dowsing inquiry, probably in the form of mentally asking ‘’Yes/No’ questions, he states that it is still in the Oakland area, and if Mayer would send him a street map he will locate it for her. Note that he said he *will* locate it, not that he *might* locate it. His sense of certainty cannot be based upon what his normal sensory systems could possibly detect from that distance. Dr Mayer says that she felt somewhat encouraged by ‘his friendly, cheerful, heavy Arkansas accent’ but remained unconvinced that he could possibly fulfil his promise as there was, in her understanding of psychology, absolutely no way he could do possibly this.

Stage Five

The map was sent overnight and two days later McCoy telephoned Dr Mayer to say that he had located the harp, stating that, ‘it’s in the second house on the right on D----------Street, just off L---------Avenue’. We can imagine that he has spread the map out on a table in front of him and methodically ‘asked’ the dowsing implements, in this case a metal rod held loosely in each hand parallel to each other and free to swivel and cross over each other, or away from each other. Major McCoy then asked whether the harp was in area A or B, interpreting their response as either ‘Yes’ if they crossed, or ‘No’, if they swung apart. The rod crossing Yesses’ would narrow the map area down until they settled over this particular street intersection and exact location.

Again, we must pause to consider what has happened. This was a very bold assertion to make from hundreds of miles away. It placed his credibility as a dowser who can locate lost objects on the line, together with claims for the efficacy of dowsing as represented by the ASD of which he was then President. It is difficult to see how anything we know about what our five senses can detect would enable anyone to confidently state that the stolen

harp was in house X in Oakland. However, this still amounted to no more than a bold statement of location, as Dr Mayer was still faced with the problem of finding out whether he was correct. Knocking on the door and politely asking whoever answered whether they had stolen a small harp was very unlikely to meet with, 'yes I did, please come in, here it is'.

Stage Six

The area of Oakland that McCoy had identified was unknown to Dr Mayer, but feeling she must now follow this lead, she drove there, noted the house number and went to the police to tell them that she had received a tip off that the stolen harp was there. They were very unimpressed, saying that such a vague tip did not justify a search warrant. They also said that they were closing the case, pointing out that as the harp was a very portable and marketable item, the thief would have sold it on long ago.

Stage Seven

Still having to face her devastated daughter on a daily basis, Dr Mayer felt that there must be some way of finding out if the harp was at that address, so she decided on a strategy of fly-posting two blocks of houses, thereby not being too specific to that address, offering a reward for its safe return.

Stage Eight

Three days after the fly-posting, a man telephoned to say that he had read the flyer and gave her an accurate description of the harp. He said that his next door neighbour had shown it to him, saying that he had recently 'obtained it'. He offered to get it returned to her, and after a fortnight of telephone negotiations on a proposed deal, it was arranged that she would meet a teenage boy at 10 pm in the car park of an all-night Safeways. They met, he asked, 'the harp?' and Dr Mayer nodded. The exchange took place, and she headed joyfully for home with the undamaged harp safely tucked in the back of her station wagon.

Stage Nine

Twenty five minutes later as she turned into her driveway, she says 'I had the thought *This changes everything'* (her italics). Her previous, orthodox, view of the mind had no answer to what had happened, so was obviously

incomplete.

Question

The question is, would this very personal and completely unexpected experience have '*changed everything*' for you if, before this experience, you had been a complete sceptic on all things ESP? Would it have convinced you that clairvoyance, for example, as demonstrated in this case by an example of incredibly accurate location through map dowsing, could no longer be dismissed as impossible in principle, so impossible in practice? If not, then you must have spotted the non-ESP explanation that had successfully evaded Dr Mayer. She says that she had sleepless nights as she thought about it for days afterwards, trying to find a 'normal' explanation because there must be one, but failing completely. Did she really miss something here that lets the sceptic off the ESP hook?

Assuming that Dr Mayer and her family were not suffering from a group delusion, and it all happened as she described, the only possible non-ESP explanation would seem to be that Major McCoy knew someone in the criminal fraternity of Oakland who was the thief, or who knew the thief, knew where he lived, and that he still had the harp. To pursue this line of inquiry we need to know something about Harold McCoy and assess whether it was likely that he had friends in the criminal underworld of Oakland who had told him what they had stolen, and was therefore party to some elaborate piece of deception.

Major Harold McCoy (1932-2010)

Alabama born Harold McCoy was an ex-army man. He had completed 24 years military service as an intelligence officer before retiring with the rank of United States Army Major in the late 1970s to live in Fayetteville, home to the University of Arkansas. Over the years he discovered that he had a strong gift for healing, together with a talent for finding lost objects through the medium of dowsing. In the mid 1990s he obtained a grant from the State of Arkansas to found and direct the Ozark Research Institute (ORI), Fayetteville, Arkansas, as an educational, scientific, charitable non-profit organisation, chartered by the State of Arkansas to conduct classes and research into 'The Power of Focussed Thought'. To this day, all funding remains channelled to the same end.

On a personal basis he always refused any payment, however successful the outcome of a healing, or finding something that was lost through dowsing, as he believed that his gift came from God and should be freely available to whosoever needed it. In one of his articles on the ORI website he explained that when dowsing to find a lost object it would appear in front of his mind as a clear mental image, including its location. He could then give the caller directions for finding it even when, as in Dr Mayer's case, the caller and object were over a thousand miles away. In terms of conventional psychology this is a truly ludicrous statement to make, as it is just not possible.

When Dr Mayer asked McCoy how dowsing works, he told her he had no rational explanation. All he could say, based on his experience, was that 'the rods just show what your subconscious mind knows already'. According to him their use aided dowsers to enter into a state of intuitive, clairvoyant, knowledge that they already possessed at subconscious level, and their responsive movement to this intuitive knowledge brought it into conscious focus. He said that some master dowsers find that they no longer need them as they have learned the ability to clairvoyantly 'just know' directly (p.170).

Discussion

From this account it does seem rather unlikely that Harold McCoy knew who to contact in the Oakland criminal fraternity, so one is faced with accepting that McCoy did exactly what he said he did as described to Dr Mayer. Somehow, when in the clairvoyant mindset and using his dowsing rods, he 'knew' exactly where, in a teeming city with all those hundreds of streets, the harp was hidden. We are left, therefore, with four indisputable facts:

1. That Meg's small harp was stolen from a theatre in Oakland during a pre Christmas concert.
2. That, some 2 months later, McCoy pinpointed the exact house where it was hidden using map dowsing.
3. That he achieved this feat while living in Fayetteville, some 1800 miles away.
4. That acting upon this information Dr Mayer was able to find the address, flypost locally, arrange a deal, and effect the safe return of the undamaged harp.

In this form of ‘direct knowing’ it seems that distance and the object being out of range of one’s normal senses is an irrelevant factor. The only conclusion would seem to be that some people, including the late Harold McCoy, actually possess this faculty of ‘direct knowing’ in the form of ‘remote viewing’ or, to use its older term, ‘clairvoyance’. For him, the state of mind in which his ‘direct knowing’ occurred was induced through the technique of dowsing. As this feat of mental detection is not possible through any of the accepted five senses, some people (and possibly all people if they knew how to access it), must possess some other sense, operating upon different principles from the known senses, through which such direct information can be obtained.

Known traditionally as the ‘sixth sense’, this hypothesised faculty of *psi*, or extrasensory perception (ESP), appears to employ different forms of ‘direct knowing’, such as telepathy or remote viewing, according to circumstance. Evidence to support the hypothesis that some, if not all people, possess a functioning psi faculty comes from thousands of well documented personal experiences together with extensive laboratory data including many successful studies on remote viewing (Radin, 2006, Targ, 2012).

That we do not, as yet, have an explanation as to the nature of psi and how it works is not a valid reason to reject the hypothesis if the evidence demands that such a faculty must exist. After all, we have no explanation as to the nature of consciousness and its qualial properties of thought, memory, emotion and sense of self, that are at complete odds with the nonconscious, quantitative properties, of the physical universe, including the brain that obeys physical laws and equations. Yet we accept that consciousness exists on the anecdotal basis of daily experiencing.

Conclusion

Given the unchallenged facts of this case it would seem reasonable to accept that the faculty of psi, as expressed in ESP phenomena, exists, and the extensive data claimed to be evidence of its operation should be taken into account when exploring the nature and properties of mind. If this contention is accepted, then it follows that psychology texts need to include a section on psi, as manifested in ESP experiences such as telepathy (Wilkins and Sherman, 2004), as a legitimate area of psychological inquiry.

Originally published: *PR.* 61: 28-31.(Jan. 2012) as ‘Some Reflections on the Loss and Return of a Small Harp’.

References

Mayer, E. L. (2007). *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, scepticism and the inexplicable powers of the human mind.* Bantam Books, New York.

Ozark Research Institute (www.ozarkresearch.org)

Radin, D. (2006). *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory experiences in a quantum reality* Paraview Pocket Books, New York.

Targ, R. (2012). *The Reality of ESP: A Physicist’s Proof of Psychic Abilities.* Wheaton, Ill. Theosophical Publishing House.

Wilkins, H., Sherman, H, M. (2004). *Thoughts through Space*. Hampton Roads, Charlottesville, VA.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

In 1935 Wing Commander Goddard sees a vision of a deserted Scottish airfield as it would look as rebuilt RAF Drem in 1939

From 1939 until his death in 1987, Air Marshall Sir Robert Victor Goddard (KCB, CBE, DL) remained convinced that when flying over what should have looked like a deserted airfield in Scotland in 1935, he had received a precognitive vision of how it would look in 1939 as a rebuilt, re-equipped, airfield renamed as RAF Drem. According to his post-war talks and his two written accounts (Goddard, 1966, 1975) all his 1935 observations were confirmed in 1939, and his experience has been quoted in precognitive literature, both in print and on paranormal websites, as a factually confirmed precognition beyond all possible doubt. Goddard's eminence as an RAF Air Marshall means that his claim carries great professional authority, as there would seem to be no reason for him to recount the experience as a confirmed premonition if it had not happened as described.

This inquiry

The purpose of this inquiry is to assess whether his belief that it was a fulfilled precognition is supported by what is known about the circumstances, or whether there might be an alternative explanation. What is not in dispute is that he saw what he said he saw.

Sources

The main sources consulted are Goddard's 1966 account (reproduced verbatim in Andrew Mackenzie's 1974 book *Riddle of the Future*), and his autobiographical account in his 1975 book *Flight Towards Reality*, together with online information from official and civilian sources concerning some technical issues raised by the circumstances as described by Goddard. Also taken into account are summaries of the case by Colin Wilson (1988/2002), James Brennan (1997) and Dennis Bardens (1991) and their conclusion that

his precognition had been fully confirmed.

A map of the Edinburgh/East Lothian area is strongly recommended, as it was a look at the map after reading Goddard's two accounts of his experience that raised questions and initiated this inquiry. Page references for Goddard's 1966 account, originally published in *Light*, the official journal of the College for Psychic Studies, are from Mackenzie's authorised reproduction, published in his book as Chapter Five, *A pre-view of a wartime airfield.*

A summary of Goddard's experience

One weekend in 1935 Goddard flew his RAF Hawker Hart light bomber biplane from where he was stationed in RAF Andover in Hampshire, to RAF Turnhouse, Edinburgh (now Edinburgh Airport) and then drove to stay with his hostess Mrs Peploe in North Berwick, East Lothian, and play golf with friends. Whilst there he and Mrs Peploe visited an ex-WW1 airfield, known as Gullane airfield, on the Sunday to see if he could land there in future as it would be much more convenient than RAF Turnhouse. Finding a scene of derelict hangars and pastures separated by barbed wire, with cattle, sheep and pigs, he concluded that it was completely unsuitable for landing an aircraft. On Monday morning he returned to RAF Turnhouse where his aircraft had been parked for the weekend, and despite dense cloud and heavy rain took off at around 8.30 am to fly due south back to Andover. But soon after take-off he was caught up in a spiralling downdraft and emerged off course some 30 miles northeast over the Firth of Forth almost at sea level. Regaining control, he flew south again, crossing the East Lothian shoreline, almost hitting a high walled esplanade and a girl pushing a pram, and then over Gullane airfield to re-establish his bearings. As he crossed the airfield boundary he emerged into sudden bright sunlight and saw, to his bewilderment, re-roofed hangars, a new grass airfield, three Avro 504N biplanes that he recognised and two monoplanes (single wing) that he did not recognise, all painted in chrome yellow instead of standard 1935 RAF silver aluminium, and two mechanics dressed in blue overalls instead of standard 1935 RAF brown. As he left the airfield he flew back into thick cloud and rain before climbing above the cloud into sunshine and arriving back in Andover at 11am.

On his return to Andover, and feeling completely baffled by what he had seen, he told his fellow wing commanders of his strange experience. One

of them, Wing Commander A.C. Stevens, remarked disbelievingly, ‘next time you go to Scotland, lay off the whisky mon.’ Realising that repeating the story would not be good for his professional reputation, Goddard decided not to mention it again during his career. Nonetheless, he remained firmly convinced from 1939 onwards that he had been privileged to receive a precognitive vision of a rebuilt Gullane airfield, renamed RAF Drem aerodrome, because by 1939 all RAF trainer aircraft were painted yellow to reduce the number of flying accidents, and all RAF engineers and maintenance staff wore blue overalls. The monoplanes he had not recognised at the time he identified later as the newly introduced Miles Magister single engine trainer. Following retirement in 1951, he became a strong advocate for the existence of paranormal phenomena, including precognition, life after death, and the possibility of UFOs and aliens, becoming a member of the Society for Psychical Research and the College of Psychic Studies.

Goddard’s two accounts

Goddard’s 1966 and 1975 accounts of that weekend in 1935 each comprise three key descriptive elements:

1. Apparently normal everyday experiences such as his flight to Scotland to play golf with friends and his visit to Gullane airfield on the Sunday.
2. Apparently normal experiences as a pilot when flying through cloud and rain and being caught in a frightening downdraught.
3. An apparently paranormal, precognitive vision of Gullane airfield, transformed into how it would look in 1939 as the rebuilt, re-equipped, and renamed RAF Drem.

Each of these three elements will now be considered in some detail, starting with Goddard’s own descriptions of what occurred.

The visit to Gullane Airfield on Sunday

Wing Commander Victor Goddard, then aged 38, was an experienced pilot who had flown in the Royal Naval Air Service during World War One. Following a 1929 to 1931 tour of duty in Iraq flying Hawker Hart light bomber biplanes during an uprising there, he was appointed Staff Officer in charge of Operational Policy at No.3 Bomber Group, RAF Andover, Hampshire, a base for Hawker Hart aircraft. On the weekend in question he flew a Hawker Hart from Andover to RAF Turnhouse before driving some thirty miles eastward on the main A198 Edinburgh to North Berwick road, along the East Lothian coast, to stay with his hostess Mrs Peploe in North Berwick and join friends for a round of golf. He states that on the Sunday, accompanied by Mrs Peploe and the local farmer Keith Chalmers-Watson of Fenton Barns who owned the site, he visited Gullane airfield to see if he could land there during future visits. In his own words 'I found the old airfield divided into many separate pastures by barbed wire, each being well populated by sheep or cattle, and one with pigs. The hangars were nearing dereliction; they were all in use as barns for hay and farm machinery, cow byres and chicken runs. It certainly was no longer a fit place for landing or housing any kind of aeroplane' (1975, p.24). In his 1966 account (Mackenzie, p.81) Goddard included further description of the hangars: 'four hangars laid out in line, three sets of double hangars and one single. However, the roofs were falling in and they were in no state to house aircraft. The tarmac was in sad disrepair and the airfield divided by barbed wire fences with cattle grazing.'

Flying back in cloud and rain on Monday morning

On Monday morning Goddard left Mrs Peploe, drove back to RAF Turnhouse, and despite thick cloud and rain, took off to fly due south back to Andover. But, as described in his 1975 account (p.24), something very unexpected happened:

> 'Next day – it was the very next, not more than sixteen hours later – my Hawker Hart and I approached, quite inadvertently, in hopefulness but uncertainty, a gloomy silhouette of hangars in downpouring rain beneath dark clouds which scarcely cleared the hangar roofs. I did not hope to

land there; that was never my thought; I was intent upon no more than pin-pointing my position, for I had become disorientated while flying back to Andover and was many miles off course. The reason is irrelevant, but in spinning out of the cloud about five minutes earlier I had nearly killed a girl wheeling a pram. She ducked to miss my scything wing-tip and I seemed to be uncomfortably near death.

Yes, this was Drem airfield, right enough – I recognised the hangars as I crossed the

boundary fence at less than 30 feet (9m) in driving rain.' (then follows his apparently precognitive experience as he crossed the sunlit airfield). Then 'I was plunged again into the pouring rain; the vision had evaporated. I climbed through the cloud to 17,000 feet (5,000m) into brilliant sunshine' and continued his return flight back to Andover.'

Goddard's 1966 account (Mackenzie, pp. 81-82) is far more detailed, commencing from the moment that he decided to fly back to Andover despite the weather:

'I was somewhat depressed by the state of the low clouds and rain, knowing that I had to fly over mountainous country in an open aircraft without radio navigational aids or cloud-flying instruments; nevertheless, I felt confident that I could get through. I believed that I should be able to fly above a low layer of clouds in the space between that layer and an upper layer. But when I took off and climbed there was no gap; continuous clouds persisted to over 8,000 feet (2,500m), where I began to be aware that I was out of control and coming down in a spiral – a state of flying I was unable to correct. I could make the spiralling faster or less fast, but I could not bring the aircraft into a condition where the compass ceased to spin. I was losing height rapidly and was unaware of my position, or whether I should strike mountains before I came out of the clouds. When the altimeter showed 1,000 feet (304m) I appreciated that unless I came quickly out of the clouds I was heading for disaster. The air was getting very dark indeed, and the clouds had become yellowish-brown and drenching with rain. At two hundred feet only (60m), spiralling steeply, I began to see a murky sort of daylight and immediately emerged over "rotating water" which instantaneously I knew to be the Firth of Forth.

> In a moment I saw, rotating slowly from right to left, a stone sea-wall carrying a road, path and railings. Falling so rapidly, I was almost instantaneously level with it, turning head-on into it – it had a high wall at back, beyond which I could not see. I would have struck the railing, the road or the back wall had I not instantly regained my sense of the vertical, thanks to the railings on the esplanade, and a girl who was running in the pouring rain with a pram – she had to duck her head to miss my wing-tip! This shaking experience enabled me to check my spiralling in the nick of time before I struck the sea-wall, and then to clear the railing and finally to lift the nose before it struck the water, which I only just avoided. I whistled rapidly over the stony beach in pouring rain, which obscured any distant view of the country beyond.
>
> Flying at 150 miles an hour (241km/h) in an open cockpit aeroplane with heavy rain driving on one's forehead and flying goggles is not only painful but very difficult, especially as I could go no other than close to the ground at about 30 feet (9m) because of the low cloud at about 40-60 feet (12-18m). I was determined to head straight on to identify my position for, with the compass swinging, I did not know on which side of the Firth of Forth I might be. The easiest landmark to find would be, I presumed, Drem airfield where I had been only the day before. In a few minutes I was aware of my position. I identified the road to Edinburgh, and soon afterwards saw looming through the gloom the black silhouettes of the Drem hangars. In a moment I was over the airfield boundary in deluging rain and very dark, turbulent flying conditions.'

Then follows his apparently precognitive experience. As in the first account, on leaving the airfield he re-entered cloud and rain, climbed into sunshine, and flew back to Andover.

Discussion of Goddard's two accounts

If you do not know the East Lothian area there is no apparent reason to question either Goddard's description of Gullane airport when he visited it on the Sunday, or his almost fatal flight on Monday morning through cloud and

rain, prior to his apparently precognitive experience. However, with a map of the area to hand, and further information about Gullane airfield in 1935, some difficult-to-explain anomalies are present in both accounts.

Anomalies in the description of the visit to Gullane Airfield on Sunday

The problem with Goddard's description of Gullane airfield when he says that he visited it on foot that Sunday with Mrs Peploe and the owner Mr Chalmers-Watson is that it is not compatible with what the airfield actually looked like, and what was happening there at the time. Goddard describes the hangars as nearing dereliction with their roofs falling in, and the airfield divided into a network of barbed wire pastures with grazing cattle and sheep, so completely unsuitable for landing any aircraft. Yet an aerial photograph of Gullane airfield (Figure 1), taken in 1935, shows the hangars and their roofs in a good state of repair and no evidence of livestock grazing barbed wire pastures.

Figure 1. Gullane airfield (later RAF Drem) in 1935. Reproduced by kind permission of Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust.

This is not surprising because, according to the RAF History Drem website, from 1933 onwards it was in occasional use during coastal defence exercises by 602 (City of Glasgow) and 603 (City of Edinburgh) squadrons, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, flying Hawker Hart light bombers. It would have been impossible for a squadron of some 12-16 aircraft to land or take-off in the

face of barbed wire fences and panicking livestock, so the operational area of the airfield must have remained clear of all obstacles and suitable for landing and take-off, with serviceable hangars and good concrete aprons. Also, as will be discussed later, it seems that at least five aircraft were actually housed in the hangars that Sunday, one in the most northerly, single, hangar. Whatever ex-World War One disused airfield with dilapidated hangars Goddard, Mrs Peploe and Mr Chalmers-Watson visited that Sunday (and there were several derelict WW1 airfield sites in East Lothian at the time), it could not possibly have been Gullane airfield.

This suggests that they must have visited some other, derelict, ex-WW1 airfield, and that Goddard has transferred that experience to Gullane airfield in later memory. But this is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, if Mr Chalmers-Watson was involved, he would obviously have known whether or not the airfield they were visiting was Gullane. Secondly, further inquiry has discovered that no other ex WW1 derelict airfield with partially destroyed hangars was still standing in 1935. Maybe in later recall Goddard conflated a past memory of another derelict airfield in a state of disrepair with his precognitive experience on the Monday morning.

Anomalies in the description of the return flight in cloud and rain on Monday

As mentioned previously, it would be easier for the reader to follow this discussion by reference to a large map of the Edinburgh and East Lothian area, showing the relevant geographical relationships between RAF Turnhouse (Edinburgh Airport), Gullane (RAF Drem) airfield, the sandy, low lying East Lothian coastline, the Firth of Forth and North Berwick. Without a map it is difficult to visualise the relationship between the locations discussed. The site of RAF Turnhouse is some 2 miles (3.2km) west of Edinburgh and about 3 miles (4.8km) inland. It is 22 miles ((35.2km) west and lies on a latitude 2 miles ((3.2km) south of Gullane airfield. Gullane is about 2½ miles (4.0 km) inland from its nearest coastal point close to the small town of Luffness. The Firth of Forth is around 12-15 miles (19.0 - 24.0km) wide opposite the East Lothian coast. The main A198 Edinburgh to North Berwick runs roughly parallel and close to the East Lothian coastline, and the similar A291 road runs roughly parallel to the northern Firth of Forth coastline.

As Andover lies due south of Edinburgh, Goddard would have taken off from RAF Turnhouse on Monday morning to fly south at around 100mph (160km/h) while he was climbing through the rain clouds to about 8,000 feet (2438m), as described in his 1966 account. He does not mention that he was flying against a violent, southerly storm or gale, only through thick cloud and pouring rain, so in about ten minutes he would have been about 20 miles (32km) south of RAF Turnhouse, passing over the Carlops and West Linton area, some 30 miles southwest of Luffness. In his oddly stilted 1975 account he makes no mention of what had happened to his flight between take-off from RAF Turnhouse and finding himself spiralling out of dense cloud over the Firth of Forth, and just missing a girl with a pram running along a high, railed, promenade in pouring rain. Astonishingly, he says that the reason is irrelevant, despite being transported backwards at a land speed of well over 100 mph to finish 30 or so miles (48km) off course, north east of where he should have been if flying due south. He goes on to say that five minutes after just missing the high walled esplanade and the girl, during which time he would have flown about 13 miles (4.8km) inland at 150mph (241km/h), and with his visibility limited by the driving rain on his goggles, he crossed the boundary of Gullane airfield - which, in fact, was only some 2½ miles (4.0km) inland. None of the details in this this account makes any sense, as the northeast aerial displacement he describes is just not physically possible unless he turned the plane around and flew north.

A further complication is that he says he had no idea whether he had crossed the northern or southern shore of the 12-15 miles (19-24km) wide Firth of Forth, which implies he had no idea with spinning compass whether he was flying north or south; yet he goes on to say that the easiest landmark to find would be Gullane airfield. Obviously, this would not have been the case if he had been on the northern side flying north. However, despite the dense cloud and rain-drenched visibility he somehow recognised a road in the very brief moment of crossing over it in the pouring rain as the A198 Edinburgh road on the south side, instead of the very similar A291 on the north side. But even so, he would have had no idea where he had crossed it in relation to where Gullane airfield was situated, so it is difficult to see how, flying at 150mph (241km/h) at almost ground level ‘in pouring rain which obscured any distant view of the country beyond’ he could possibly have known which direction to take to find it. Using a map of the area it is

impossible to reconcile either his 1966 or his 1975 account with aeronautical and geographical reality.

Flying without navigational aids

In his 1966 account, Goddard said that despite the cloud and rain he set off that morning ‘in an open aircraft with no radio navigational aids or cloud-flying instruments.’ Dennis Bardens offers as explanation that Goddard accepted the risk of taking off in bad weather despite such handicaps because ‘he was young and tough and confident’ (p.77). While certainly tough and confident, he was 38, married with a young daughter, and Wing Commander Staff Officer in charge of Operational Policy for No 3 Bomber Group, at RAF Andover. Given these responsibilities, it seems unlikely that he would have been foolhardy enough to risk life and aircraft in attempting to take off from RAF Turnhouse if the weather had been a real hazard with abnormally strong head winds - especially, as he says, without radio navigation and a lack of cloud-flying instrumentation.

But this latter point raises another problem: it would have been impossible to fly a 1935 RAF Hawker Hart without cloud-flying navigational instruments. The Hawker Hart biplane, which entered RAF service in 1930, was the premier military aircraft of the day in the early to mid-1930s. It was in service with many air forces throughout the world, and the instrument panel for this aircraft was standardised. According to Jim Greaves (personal communication) Assistant Librarian, Shuttleworth Trust, the Fore-and-Aft Indicator (indicating the up/down nose angle of the aircraft compared to the horizontal) and the gyro controlled Turn-and-Bank Indicator (indicating direction) were the two essential ‘cloud-flying instruments’ that Goddard would have been referring to; and Greaves was unable to offer any explanation as to how Goddard could have been flying a Hawker Hart which was not equipped with them.

Of his experience as a pilot during this difficult flight, Goddard says that, ‘flying at 150 miles (241km) an hour in an open cockpit aeroplane with heavy rain driving on one’s forehead and flying goggles is not only painful but very difficult’, which would certainly be true. Surely any attempt to do so would have been recklessly suicidal in such circumstances, as he could neither see his instrument panel clearly, nor see where he was going with the rain driving against his goggles. The same disadvantage would have applied

to all Hawker Hart open cockpit pilots. But, in fact, all Hawker Harts were equipped with a Perspex windshield designed to protect the face of the pilot from driving rain, hail, sleet and snow, so the pilot could see the instruments on his instrument panel in cloud or fog, as he was dependent upon them. A wind shield was, and is, a standard fitting for all open cockpit aircraft (Rolling, 2017, personal communication).

Although this helps prevent rain hitting the goggles, seeing changes in ground height and tall ground-based hazards such as church towers through a streaming, rain-drenched wind shield when flying so very low can be extremely hazardous. Given this potentially fatal situation it is difficult to see why Goddard continued to fly at 150 mph (241km/h) at near ground level when trying to find Gullane airfield. With a stall speed of 45mph (72km/h) he could have safely throttled back to around 60 mph, which would have allowed him more time to identify ground features and calculate where Gullane airfield would be in relationship to where he was flying at that moment.

Goddard's account of this stage of his return journey is completely baffling, including the apparent incident where he flew over a high railed esplanade and just missed a girl with a pram. An online search of the eleven miles of the East Lothian seashore between Cockenzie and Port Seton to the west, and North Berwick to the east, failed to locate any such structure. This finding was confirmed by the local government historian Bill Wilson (2017, personal communication) who, besides being personally familiar with the whole coastline, concluded his investigation, including a search of historical records, by saying: 'I just cannot trace this location.' Esplanade railings would have been used if this large, protective, high walled, seaside structure had fronted a town, but no town is mentioned, only flying straight into open countryside at almost ground level. So why does Goddard say that he flew over a high walled esplanade when no such wall existed? With these unresolvable anomalies in mind, we now turn to consideration of the paranormal experience itself.

Goddard's Precognitive Experience

This is described in Goddard's 1975 account (pp. 24-25) as follows:

> 'Yes, this was Drem airfield, right enough – I recognised the hangars as I crossed the boundary fence at less than thirty feet in driving rain. Then

suddenly the scene was lit with brilliant light that I supposed was sunshine. The airfield was clear, new-mown and clean, the nearest hangar doors were open and on the tarmac apron, wet from recent rain, stood, parked, four aeroplanes – three biplanes (Avro 504s) and then a monoplane of unknown type. Emerging through the hangar doors there was a second monoplane being pushed by two mechanics, one on the tail, one on the starboard wing. All five machines were brilliant yellow chrome. The mechanics, who were there attending them, were all in dungarees of blue. I backed my "stick" to clear the hangar roof.

The year was 1935. We had no yellow aeroplanes in service then. Nor had we any monoplanes. Our airmen wore brown overalls. I noted quite a dozen features of anomaly. The hangars had all been refurbished. The tarmac was all new. But what surprised me most of all in this surprising vision was the indifference of the airmen to my zooming over them at thirty feet. Not one of them looked up. But they were real men. The unreality to them must then have been myself and my quite physical conveyance. No airman anywhere, on any tarmac in the world – that is, the world we think we know – could then have failed to look at me had I been <u>there</u> for him to see, and had my roaring Hawker Hart been <u>there</u> for him to hear. Those airmen did not pay the slightest heed to me or it. I sped the length of that quadruple-hangar layout, traversing the roofs at speed. In seconds I had cleared the fourth and last of those four sets of "newly covered" buildings, then I was plunged again into the pouring rain; the vision had evaporated.'

His 1966 account (Mackenzie pp 83-84) provides similar details:

'On crossing the boundary, the airfield and all my immediate surroundings were miraculously bathed in full sunlight as it seemed to me; the rain had ceased, the hangars were nearby, their northwest end doors open. Lined out in spick and span order on a newly laid tarmac were four aeroplanes: three biplanes of a standard flying-training type of aircraft called Avro 504N; one monoplane of an unknown type. We had at that time no monoplanes in the RAF, but the one I saw then was of the type which thereafter I carried in my memory and identified with the Magister which became, later on, a "trainer". Another peculiarity about the aeroplanes on the tarmac was that they were painted in bright chrome

yellow. All aircraft in the RAF in 1935 were exclusively aluminium doped; there were no yellow aeroplanes.'

By 1939 all RAF trainers were painted yellow to reduce the number of accidents caused by trainee pilots having difficulty in distinguishing other aluminium coloured aircraft in flight (Haddaway, 2017a. personal communication). There had also been a major redesign of RAF uniforms and service dress for all ranks, and blue became the official colour in 1936 (Haddaway, 2017b). The two monoplanes that Goddard saw and later identified as Miles Magister single engined trainers, had entered RAF service in late 1937, with the expansion of RAF Elementary Flying Schools as the prospect of war loomed; and, according to Goddard, the Miles Magister was one of the fleet of training aircraft used by the new flying school based at RAF Drem in 1939. His unexpected vision in 1935 of a future RAF Drem had seemingly come true.

Goddard's knowledge of RAF Drem

In late 1935 Goddard left his staff college position at RAF Andover, following his appointment as Deputy Director for European Intelligence, Air Ministry Directorate of Intelligence, concentrating on gathering information on the size and potential fighting capacity of European air forces. From this time onwards he had no personal involvement with RAF policy concerning re-opening airfields, developing new flying training schools or introducing new trainer aircraft. Despite this, with regard to RAF Drem he says that 'the place was rebuilt and reopened as a flying school in 1939, equipped with yellow Avro 504N biplanes and Magister monoplanes exactly similar to the types I had seen' (Mackenzie, p.66). He goes on to say that 'I didn't actually go to see for myself; I was told that Drem had been turned into an Elementary Flying Training School, so I knew that it must have all the standard equipment for such a school: they were standardised throughout the Air Force.' (Mackenzie, p.66). His belief that he had received a precognitive vision of what RAF Drem would look like in 1939, and the trainer aircraft it would be equipped with, was therefore based solely on an unverified assumption of standardisation of training aircraft across all the new flying schools.

RAF Drem in reality

The real problem is that what Goddard saw that sunlit morning was not how RAF Drem would have looked in 1939, even as far as the hangars were concerned – a fact that Goddard saw for himself when he visited Drem in 1964 (it had had been decommissioned in 1946). Although the hangars had been rebuilt in the same general area, they were partly repositioned, their doors opened in a different direction, and they were built on a much larger scale, using a corrugated iron construction with corrugated iron roofs, instead of the black, wet, bituminous roofs that he saw. In consequence, as Goddard realised when he saw it (although, strangely, it did not affect his precognitive conviction) the yellow aircraft he saw could not have been lined up where he had seen them in 1935 because they would not have been in front of the repositioned 1939 hangar doors. As for the three yellow Avro 504N single engine biplane trainers, they had been taken out of RAF service in 1933-34 and had been replaced by the similar-looking Avro Tutor - which, in turn, had been phased out of service by 1939. According to RAF History, Drem, No.13 Flying School never received any Avro 504Ns, or Avro Tutors, or Miles Magister monoplanes as training aircraft. From the start they used Hawker Hart and Hawker Audax biplanes, twin-engined, Airspeed Oxford monoplanes, and twin-engined Avro Anson monoplanes, neither of which looked like single-engined Miles Magister trainers.

Gullane airfield in 1935

The only remaining features common to Gullane airfield in 1935 and RAF Drem in 1939 were aircraft painted yellow, and mechanics dressed in blue overalls, and there seems to be a much more likely and straightforward explanation for these than precognition. What was overlooked by Goddard and his fellow officers, as well as by all later commentators who have accepted his account in total without question, is that in 1935 Gullane airfield was not RAF property. It was vacated by the RAF in 1919 with its hangars, adjacent accommodation blocks, offices, storerooms and grass airfield intact, and had reverted to local farm ownership. From 1933 onwards it came back into occasional use as an airfield by 602 (City of Glasgow) and 603 (City of Edinburgh) Royal Auxiliary Air Force bomber squadrons, flying Hawker Harts during coastal defence exercises. According to Hadaway (2017c),

although no official records could be located it seems likely that the Air Ministry would have entered into contract with the owner and would have been paying rent for use of the airfield's facilities. This implies that by 1933 the hangars, concrete aprons and grass airfield were in a good state of repair as indicated by the photograph in Figure 1, and any area used for farming was kept well clear of the landing area.

When Goddard flew over Gullane airfield the most likely explanation for what he saw is that it was being used by a local civilian flying club: the yellow aeroplanes belonged to them, and their mechanics happened to wear blue overalls. Local air displays and joy rides were very popular and lucrative pursuits during the interwar years, and there were many flying clubs. For visitors flying into Gullane airfield East Lothian attractions would have included (and still do) excellent golf courses, long stretches of sandy coastline between the small coastal towns of Gullane, Aberlady and Luffness, and the larger town of North Berwick with its West Bay, together with ancient monuments and much local history.

Chrome yellow was a popular colour for flying clubs, as it was an easy colour for pilots, especially trainee pilots, to see when in flight, and was very visible against the sky during aerial displays. The Avro 504 and its many variants would have been familiar to Goddard because they were used by the RAF from 1913 until they were phased out in the early thirties. As it was a very reliable and manoeuvrable biplane with an excellent safety record, many were bought by flying clubs and by private owners. As for the two yellow monoplanes that Goddard did not recognise because the RAF did not possess any monoplanes in 1935, there were several different types of monoplanes in civilian flying club and private ownership use during the 1930s.

Goddard is surprised that the airmen did not look up as he flew over, but the two men pushing the monoplane out of the hangar would have been bent forward so would have had no time to look up, and if the four aircraft already outside had their engines running to warm up, they may never have heard him.

RAF roundels

Perhaps the most striking, and baffling, omission from Goddard's account (and his assumption that what he saw were RAF aircraft) is any reference to

seeing RAF roundels. From the end of 1914 onwards, all British military aircraft were painted with large roundels on their wings and sides so that the troops in the trenches on the Western Front could distinguish between British and German aircraft. These roundels consist of a red centre surrounded by a white ring and an outer dark blue ring together with vertical red, white and blue stripes on the tail and would have been visually striking against the chrome yellow background when seen from above. If they had been present, they would have provided a strong argument in favour of Goddard having a precognition that RAF trainers would be painted yellow in years to come. Without such roundel and tail stripe identification the aircraft that he saw that morning could not possibly have been RAF aircraft, so the only organisation possessing such aircraft would have been a civilian flying club.

When did Goddard see sunlit Gullane?

Both of Goddard's accounts agree that early on the Monday morning he emerged out of a descending aerial spiral just clear of the Firth of Forth, then flew inland through thick cloud and pouring rain to cross over a fully functioning, sunlit, Gullane airfield before flying straight into dense raincloud and climbing out into sunshine at 17000 ft (5000m). The problem lies in his assertion that he saw the sunlit scene early on Monday morning at the start of his return flight to Andover. This was not meteorologically possible given the weather conditions he describes. If, after crossing the sunlit southern boundary of Gullane airfield, he plunged straight back into thick cloud and rain and had to climb to 17000 ft (5000m) before emerging into sunshine, this means that there was a high bank of dense raincloud between Gullane airfield and the low rays of the early morning sun, so whenever he saw Gullane in sunshine it could not possibly have been at around 8.30 am on that Monday morning. If the flight occurred later that day to allow for the high rays of midday sunshine to shine down between the two banks of cloud this contradicts the 11.00am timing of his Monday morning return to Andover, and subsequent discussion with his fellow officers as to what he had seen, as he would not have got back until mid afternoon.

If Goddard arrived back in Andover at 11.00 am, as seems reasonably certain as he was returning to duty, then the flight over sunlit Gullane must have taken place on a different day, and in later memory he has transferred it to Monday morning in his two accounts, written some 30 and 40 years later,

respectively. If it was during that weekend, and assuming that he played golf on the Saturday, then it could only have taken place on the Sunday while flying over the Firth of Forth at around midday. Presumably, he flew into thick cloud and rain, got caught in a localised squall that sent him into a descending spiral to emerge over the water close to the coastline, levelled out as he flew south towards the foreshore, and flew over a sunlit Gullane, being completely unaware that it had been fully restored in the early 1930s and was now operating as an airfield again.

Through a midday sunshine break in between slow moving or stationary rain clouds (he mentions fog so there could not have been storm winds) he sees to his surprise the black bituminous roofs of the hangars still gleaming from recent rain, the yellow aircraft, blue overalled mechanics and a newly mown grass airfield before flying back into raincloud again. However, although this explanation makes meteorological sense, it does not explain why he would have returned from Mrs Peploe's to RAF Turnhouse on Sunday morning to fly over the Firth of Forth in cloud and rain. Nor does it tally with his account of seeing Gullane on Sunday on foot with Mrs Peploe and the local farmer, and having his sunlit precognition on Monday morning. Everything about his two accounts for that weekend is confusing, and much that is described in his accounts was just not possible.

Conclusion

Given the intractable problems inherent in Goddard's account of that weekend, the only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that he saw, to his surprise, a sunlit, fully operational Gullane airport being used by a civilian flying club, equipped with at least three yellow biplanes, two monoplanes and two mechanics dressed in blue overalls.

Goddard’s third account of his experience: an unexpected twist

However, there is one more unexpected, and even more confusing, twist to this story that came to light after my previous investigations and conclusions were published. It raises even more questions about Goddard’s accounts of his experience that weekend, and comes in the form of a letter he wrote sometime in the 1950s. This letter was addressed to physicist Raynor C. Johnson, then Master of Queen's College, Melbourne University, and is quoted with permission in a book by Arthur Osborn, *The Future Is Now: The*

Significance of Precognition (1961) as Case 54, one of a series of precognitive case studies. It seems that both Johnson and Osborn knew Goddard personally. Osborn prefaces his quote of the letter by assuring readers that 'the status of the narrator is a guarantee of the accuracy of the account', and they had no reason to believe otherwise. The problem is that the descriptions in this letter differ significantly from Goddard's two later accounts, leaving us with an even more confused and contradictory picture as to what really happened that weekend.

The 1950s Letter

'In the winter of 1934 I was flying an airplane, it was a Hawker "Hart" a mighty fast plane in those days! (In fact, it was in a plane of that type that, in the following year, I held the Edinburgh to London speed record). In the cloud and fog and heavy rain I had come spiralling down 8,000 feet, out of control all the way, so I was wondering whether I should plunge into the mountains of Scotland or into the Firth of Forth before I got my "Hart" under control again…

My Hawker "Hart" was at last under control, my personal heart was not - it was in my throat….I flew straight on, climbing slightly to clear the foreshore and I said to myself "If I go straight on I'll hit off Drem Airfield. That is, if I'm going where I think I am, and going the way I think I am going". In a few minutes, sure enough, through the murk the old hangars of Drem loomed ahead – black in the rain and about half a mile ahead. After the war it was abandoned and gradually the buildings fell into ruins. The hangars were used by the farmer as cow-byres and as barns for his crops and machinery. The roofs were falling in: the airfield was cut up into many grazing meadows for sheep and cattle, divided off by barbed wire fences (I had seen all that the day before.)

We're about to come to the point of this story, but first I must tell you about Drem. I had been at Drem on the ground only the day before. I knew the place and had known it for years. It was built as an aerodrome

during World War One and I knew it then. But next day I approached Drem in foul weather after my hair-raising experience over Leith, I wanted something to restore my confidence before I again tried to climb through those turbulent clouds. For I was due to be at Andover, in Hampshire, that morning. I was fast approaching those old derelict hangars, then used for barns and cow-byres at Drem. I climbed through the deluge of rain to the misty base of the continuous low cloud overhead. The hangars were darkly looming towards me only a quarter of a mile away. Then, suddenly, the whole area was bathed in an ethereal light as though the sun were shining on a mid-summer day. As I raced over the line of those four double hangars, I saw some surprising things. Evidently, as I saw it, the rain had recently stopped. The airfield, all unfenced, was evenly mown; no cattle or sheep were grazing. The tarmac around the hangars was wide and new, the hangars all had sound new roofs, the doors of the first hangar were open and five aircraft - all bright yellow (four of them biplanes, one a monoplane) – were lined up on the tarmac. Mechanics in blue overalls were pushing out another monoplane. The men below me were not interested in me as I sped over them not more than fifty feet above the hangars and I flew out of the "sunshine" into dark rain and mist again, and into the climb which I immediately began through the clouds to clear the hidden mountains beyond. I knew that I had been "seeing things". I also knew that what I had seen was there. It was real….There was a difference in quality between the seeming reality of a dream and the felt reality of that vision. In 1938 Drem was rebuilt and reopened as a Flying Training School. What I had seen as I flew over, and described to friends, came to pass four years later in all its novel details. And then I knew I had to sort out my ideas about free will and fate and determinism.'"

Comparison with later accounts and implications

The first point to note is that this letter places events in the winter of 1934, whereas the two later accounts agree it was in 1935, probably late spring/summer. If Goddard's visit to Scotland was to play golf as he says it seems very unlikely it was in the winter. Although it is not material to the main story whether events took place in winter 1934 or spring/summer 1935, the fact that Goddard is so inconsistent in his accounts raises questions about

his memory for other timings of the events in question – not least when, or even if, he saw Gullane on the ground that weekend, or when the flight over Gullane actually took place. There is nothing in this letter to say that it was a weekend visit, or why he was there, nor does he mention Mrs Peploe and Mr Chalmers-Watson.

Goddard's knowledge of Gullane airfield

The crucial difference between this letter and the two later accounts concerns his personal knowledge of Gullane airfield and East Lothian prior to his apparent precognitive experience on the Monday. In the two later accounts (1966 and 1975) Goddard claims to have visited Gullane on the Sunday with Mrs Peploe and Mr Chalmers-Watson, to see if it was possible for him to land there in the future, rather than at RAF Turnhouse. This implies that neither he or Mrs Peploe had seen Gullane airfield before that day. In contrast to this, in his letter he says he had known Gullane, or Drem, airfield from WW1 onwards and had seen it fall into a state of disrepair with collapsed hangar roofs, and fenced in pastures post war. It is likely that he was familiar with Gullane airfield during WW1, as when he was in the Royal Navy Air Service (RNAS) he was posted to nearby East Fortune Airstation, East Lothian, in winter 1917 for a brief period.

However, this raises the question as to why he would have visited it on foot ‘the day before’ if he already knew that it was, like all the other ex WW1 airfields, in a state of post WW1 dereliction and had no reason to think the situation had changed. Gullane (Drem on modern maps) lies some three miles south of the A198 along a country road (B1345) taking him away from the golf courses. After being decommissioned by the Air Ministry in 1919, Gullane’s hangars and facilities may have been allowed to fall into partial decay during the 1920s, and this was what Goddard had seen on a previous occasion, and assumed was still the case. If so, that assumption would account for his complete surprise at seeing reroofed hangars, repaired tarmac aprons, mown grass, yellow aircraft and mechanics in blue on a subsequent flight over the airfield, and his consequent belief that he had experienced a precognition of the airfield in the future. However, this explanation cannot account for the specific reference he makes twice in his letter to having ‘been at Drem on the ground only the day before’, or the reason for that visit.

The flat foreshore

If he was familiar with Drem, then Goddard would also have been familiar with this area of East Lothian with its flat coastline, which accounts for why he said that after coming out of a spiralling downdraught over the Firth of Forth he 'flew straight on, *climbing slightly to clear the foreshore*' (my italics), before flying on through low cloud and pouring rain to see a fully operational sunlit Gullane airfield. In the 1950s letter he makes no reference to the dramatic, life-threatening, esplanade details common to both later accounts. In these he emerged from the downward spiral some 60 ft (18 m) from the surface of the sea, managed to straighten out, and flew due south at 150mph (241 km/h) 'head on' towards a stone sea wall with a road, path and railings behind which was a high back wall carrying a railed esplanade, where he just missed a girl wheeling a pram, who ducked as he roared over her.

But 'climbing slightly to clear the foreshore' is consistent with there being no evidence of a high back wall and railed esplanade anywhere along that shoreline as discussed previously. So why do the two later accounts, written some 10 and 20 years after the letter, carry this vivid description of this almost fatal event? It adds nothing to the precognitive Gullane airfield material, and its inclusion seriously detracts from the evidential reliability of many of his claimed experiences that weekend. Beyond seeing sunlit Gullane airfield it is difficult to know which, if any, of the events described in his two later accounts can be trusted as factually correct.

There are two other puzzling statements in the letter. Firstly, he claims to have won the 1935 Edinburgh to London speed record in a Hawker Hart. But there is no record of an Edinburgh to London competitive air speed race between any type of aircraft ever being run as an official event. Secondly, regarding the almost fatal spiralling downdraught, in the two later accounts this occurred over the Firth of Forth before flying inland, but in the letter he says: 'next day I approached Drem in foul weather after my hair-raising experience over Leith'. So did the 'hair-raising experience' in the pouring rain occur over Leith, which is a suburb of Edinburgh? In which case he would have known where he was, so why fly east towards Drem instead of due south? Or some 20 miles to the east over the Firth of Forth?

Osborn notes that Goddard said that he had described 'the vision' to many others, including 'a letter to the lady of the house where he had been

staying; but all she wrote in reply was “How peculiar!"' Assuming this was Mrs Peploe, her reply indicates that she thought Gullane was derelict as well, and therefore she could not make any sense of his letter. Goddard, himself, says that he wrote a ‘Thank you’ letter to Mrs Peploe describing what he saw, and she wrote back to say ‘How peculiar’, and that he was ‘very peculiar’ in saying it.

Given the emotional impact this experience had on Goddard, as summed up by him saying in his letter ‘I then knew I had to sort out my ideas about free will, fate and determinism’ (Osborn, 1961, p.102), it is surprising that he made no attempt to visit Gullane the next time he went to East Lothian, to see if what he had seen so unexpectedly was real. If he had done so, the explanation would have been obvious. Alternatively, if he was not able to visit Gullane again before 1938/9, it is surprising that he did not contact fellow officers in the City of Glasgow or City of Edinburgh Hawker Hart squadrons to inquire if they had any information concerning Gullane airfield, but there is no evidence that he did so.

A summing up

There are so many contradictory and physically impossible anomalies in Goddard’s three accounts of his experience. Was it during winter 1934, or spring/summer 1935? Did he know Gullane before it was reconditioned? Or did he see Gullane for the first time in 1935? He claimed he saw a derelict Gullane on the Sunday with Mrs Peploe and the local farmer, but this could not have happened as it was no longer derelict. Because of the thick raincloud south of Gullane he could not have seen a sunlit vision of Gullane at 8.30 am on that Monday. His account of flying through cloud and rain without navigational aids was not possible. Nor could he have ended up over the Firth of Forth to the north when flying at 100 mph due south. The claimed near-miss of a girl with a pram on a high wall with a railed esplanade did not happen, as no such structure exists and it is not mentioned in his letter - so why mention it in both later accounts? And so the inconsistences go on. Apart from flying up to RAF Turnhouse one unspecified weekend to play golf and stay with Mrs Peploe, the only consistent and credible experience is Goddard's description of seeing Gullane as a working airfield being used by a civilian flying club.

What *is* clear is that Victor Goddard retained a deeply held belief that

that he had experienced a precognitive vision, based upon an incorrect assumption that what he had seen that morning corresponded in all its main details with how RAF Drem would have looked in 1939. It so influenced the rest of his life that it was the subject of the first chapter in his 1975 book titled *Warming-Up at Drem*, and referred to repeatedly throughout the book. It formed the basis of many post-war talks.

Goddard had a prior belief in premonitions as he was certain he had already experienced two in his early life: one in 1911, aged 14, that war with Germany would start in 1914, and one, when aged 17, and a midshipman on the battleship HMS Victorious the day before war was declared, that Germany would be defeated. He therefore concluded that he had received another prevision of what was to come.

My conclusion, as reached in my first inquiry, is that Sir Victor Goddard did not have a precognitive experience in 1935 of how RAF Drem would look in 1939. This conclusion does not apply to other experiences cited by Goddard as personal precognitions, and should not be taken as implying that precognition is not a genuine phenomenon. There are some cases in the literature for which, given the known facts, it seems difficult to find a non-precognitive explanation (see chapter 19 and consult the online *Psi Encyclopedia*),

Original publications:
JSPR 83:18-30 (Jan. 2019) as ‘Was Wing Commander Victor Goddard’s unexpected observations when flying over Gullane airfield in 1935 a precognitive glimpse of that same airfield in 1939? An investigation’.
JSPR 84: 20-28 (Jan 2020) as ‘Air Marshall Sir Victor Goddard’s claim that he had a prevision of what Gullane airfield in 1935 would look like as RAF Drem in 1939 – Further investigations and conclusions.’

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Leslie Price, College of Psychic Studies, for permission to quote from *Light* (McKenzie page references); Bill Wilson, Local History Officer, John Gray Centre, Haddington, East Lothian, for his research concerning the East Lothian coastline; Stuart Haddaway, Ministry of Defence, Air Historical Branch (RAF), Northholt. for information concerning 1930s RAF uniform, the introduction of yellow paint for trainer aircraft and

likely Air Ministry contracts with the owner of Gullane airfield; Chris Rollings, Operation Manager, Tiger Airways, Gloucester, concerning experience of open cockpit flying; Jim Greaves, Assistant Librarian, Shuttleworth Trust, for Hawker Hart instrument identification and standardisation, wind shield protection and open cockpit flying.

References

Bardens, D. (1991). *Ahead of time: The mystery of precognition,* London. Robert Hale.

Brennan, J.H. (1997). *Time travel: A new perspective.* St Paul. Minn. Llewellyn Publ.

Charman, R. A. (2020). Air Marshall Sir Victor Goddard's claim that he had a prevision of what Gullane airfield in 1935 would look like as RAF Drem in 1939 – Further investigations and conclusions. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research. 84:* 20-28

Charman, R. A. (2019). Research Note: Was Wing Commander's unexpected observation when flying over Gullane Airfield In 1935 A precognitive glimpse of that airfield in 1939? *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol 83.1: 18-30

Charman, R.A. (2019). On misleading claims for an apparent premonition based upon lack of due diligence. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol 83.1: 58-59

Goddard, V. (1966). Breaking the time barrier. *Light.* Vol.83.No3465:62-70. London. College of Psychic Studies.

Goddard, V. (1975). *Flight towards reality*. London. Turnstone books.

Greaves, J. (2017). *Personal communication.*

Hadaway, S. (2017a). *Personal communication*.

Hadaway, S. (2017b). *Personal communication.*

Hadaway, S. (2017c). *Personal communication.*

Mackenzie, A. (1974). *Riddle of the future: A modern study of precognition.* London. Arthur Barker

Osborn, A.W. (1961). *The Future Is Now: The Significance of Precognition.* New York, University Books.

Psi Encyclopedia (2017). *Precognitions.* Society for Psychical Research.

Rollings, C. (2017). *Personal communication.*

Royal Air Force - Drem History. http://www.rafdrem.co.uk/history.html
Wilson, B. (2017). *Personal communication.*
Wilson, C. (1998/2008). *Beyond the occult: Twenty years research into the paranormal.* London. Watkins Publ.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Goddard Case and the author/reader relationship

The curious case of Victor Goddard, which at first reads so convincingly and then crumbles into confusion under closer scrutiny, raises an important issue about how such cases are reported by others, particularly where the experiencer claims that the paranormal experience, as in this case, received factual confirmation beyond all reasonable doubt. We are likely to assume that the original claim has been checked by the author on behalf of the reader, and what we read is therefore an accurate summary of what occurred. This really matters because a reader is likely to base their belief in, say, telepathy or precognition, or life after death, on the assumption that the author would not have included the case, or cases, if there was any doubt as to the authenticity of the experience. Unfortunately, this very reasonable assumption may be misplaced. An author may have simply accepted the experiencer's account as a true record because of who they are, or were. Or they may accept another author's account of the case as they are perceived as an authority on the subject, or in the retelling, especially when it is a summary, details may become lost, or exaggerated, or even added.

With these thoughts in mind we need to look at some of the accounts that have been written about the Victor Goddard case. Each of the four following authors, whose books are on my bookshelf, has accepted Air Marshall Sir Victor Goddard's two accounts of that strange weekend and his apparent precognition of RAF Drem without question, or even referencing Goddard's own accounts. Presumably, as Andrew Mackenzie admits, they have accepted it without question *because* he was Air Marshall Sir Victor Goddard, and would not have recounted such a story, including the bizarre events of that weekend surrounding the precognition, if it was not true in all its details. Here is what each of these authors have told their readers:

- Andrew Mackenzie published nine books on parapsychology. In *Riddle of the Future* (1974) his chapter is headed 'A pre-view of a wartime airfield'. It presents Goddard's own account as originally published in *Light,* the journal of the College of Psychic Studies, and accepts that his sunlit vision was a genuine premonition on the basis that 'Sir Victor,

because of his high rank in the RAF, was in a privileged position to be able to make the necessary inquiries to confirm what he had seen in his vision.' (p.98).

- Dennis Bardens published books on history and biography together with four books on psychic phenomena. In *Ahead of Time* (1991) he summarised Goddard's account and states that 'Later developments in the RAF proved beyond a shadow of doubt that he had flown from the present into the future and had witnessed in clarity and detail a scene not yet encompassed. Drem airfield was rebuilt and reopened as a flying school equipped with yellow Avro 504N biplanes and Magister monoplanes of the types he had seen in 1935.'(p.79). Source unreferenced.

- James Herbert Brennan has written over one hundred books on the occult and related esoterica. In *Time Travel* (1997) he states (inaccurately) that Goddard was sent to inspect Drem airfield, found it in a dilapidated state, and later that same day flew over Drem again and experienced his sunlit precognition. He then says that Goddard's precognition was confirmed factually four years later when 'With war now raging across Europe, he happened to visit Drem again to find it exactly as he had seen it in 1935, complete with blue-overalled mechanics and yellow planes. He even found the plane he had been unable to identify earlier – a Miles Magister.' (pp. 63-4). Source unreferenced.

- Colin Wilson, famous for his first book *The Outsider* (1956), wrote some fifteen books on the occult and related subjects. In *Beyond the Occult* (2008) he summarises Goddard's account and states that his sunlit premonition was confirmed in factual detail when he 'Saw Drem some four years later after it had been transformed into the airfield of his vision. The 'trainers' were now painted yellow and the mechanics wore blue overalls. A monoplane he had failed to recognise four years earlier he now identified as a Miles Magister.' (p.169). He concludes by saying that in his opinion (p.171) 'One more fact emerges very clearly. Whatever happened to Goddard, his was not a passive vision of the

future. It involved the sudden activation of *an unknown power of his own mind.* And this is something that cannot be overstressed.' (original italics). Source unreferenced.

One author, however, is in a league of his own in that he completely re-imagined Goddard's experience in a way that Goddard would not even have recognised. In its dramatic retelling it reads even more convincingly than the original!

- Martin Caidin. We met American author Martin Caidin, an experienced pilot and author of many books on aviation history, in chapter seventeen with his colourfully inaccurate account of Sir Peter Masefield flying over Montrose airfield and seeing a re-enactment of Lt, Arthur's BE2 biplane crash in 1913. It is worth reminding ourselves that in his Introduction to his book *Ghosts of the Air: True Stories of Aerial Hauntings* (1991) he assures readers that 'The material herein has been researched, studied, compared, and checked again and again', and the late astronaut Edgar Mitchell praised Caidin's 'penchant for verifiable detail that gives credibility to these bizarre events.'

Under the heading *Back to the Future* (pp 116-8) Caidin's penchant for imaginative creativity rather than 'verifiable detail that gives credibility' is certainly well to the fore. He says that the source for his account of Goddard's precognitive experience was a certain Ron Edwards, an air transport pilot. Edwards, he assures us 'Doesn't talk about things unless he is convinced they're real' and his account reads as if Edwards is repeating to Caidin what Goddard had personally told him, so perhaps we should credit Edwards rather than Caidin for what follows.

Caidin says that Edwards 'Told us about a fighter pilot of the Royal Air Force who quite obviously slipped into, for a brief time anyway, one of those "breaks in time and space" that seem to be happening more and more.'" When flying a Hawker Hart fighter (sic) over Scotland in 1934 Goddard encounters a violent thunderstorm. Realising that if he 'gets caught in the belly of a giant thunderstorm it would be asking to have his plane torn apart' he 'Cuts back the power, eases his Hawker into a glide, dodging and twisting about the blackest of clouds as he gives up altitude.' He knows that somewhere below him is Drem, an old abandoned airport, and if he can

locate it he can ‘whip down in a hurry and get safely to ground.’ Easing beneath a ‘boiling cloud base’ he sees Drem some distance ahead so he ‘brought in power and barrelled for the field that promised safety.’ While he was rapidly closing in ‘the thunderstorm seemed to split wide open. The booming clouds separated, opening widely in the form of a giant chasm in the sky. Brilliant sunshine bursts through and casts a dazzling golden glow on the countryside below.’ Looking for the runway he is astonished to see that the abandoned airfield he expected to see ‘wasn’t there.’ Instead, at some 50 feet ‘He raced across the flight line, hangars, rows of airplanes, living quarters, vehicles and hundreds of people, and no one even looked up to see his fighter streaking so low. He stared at mechanics in blue overalls working on rows of planes painted brightly yellow.’ To his very understandable bewilderment, instead of seeing a deserted airfield he is ‘circling an airport bustling with activity.’ As he made yet another pass to confirm it was Drem ‘the clouds lifted suddenly and strangely’ and he was able to fly safely away.

Edwards then tells Caidin that the RAF pilot was Victor Goddard, and Caidin, presumably from what Edwards told him, goes on to state that ‘This story is in the official registry of the Royal Airforce. Let’s put that down for the record. He’s real. What he saw beneath him was real – *even if it was impossible’* (original italics). Explaining why Goddard’s experience was a precognition beyond all possible doubt Caidin, or Edwards, rose to the occasion by saying ‘Now for the kicker. In 1934 Drem airfield was an abandoned relic. Not a soul lived or worked there. It had been empty for years. Somehow, fighting his way through the storm clouds of 1934, RAF pilot Victor Goddard had slipped into a break in space/time; he had descended through a storm that had mysteriously split open into brilliant sunshine, and he flew over an airfield that would not exist until four years into the future.’ Source unreferenced.

Given Caidin’s assurance which, as he has assured us in his Introduction, he would have doublechecked, that Goddard’s precognition was officially recognised by the RAF and is now ‘in the official registry of the Royal Airforce’ (which will be news to the RAF, and would have been news to Victor Goddard who made no such claim) why would a reader not believe that Goddard’s precognitive experience occurred exactly as Edwards related it to Caidin because it reads as if this is what Goddard had told Edwards.

Perhaps the message to take away from these thoughts is to read

accounts of apparent ESP experiences in a questioning frame of mind. If there is a fact that can be checked, especially now with everything online, and if the ESP subject, in this case precognition, is important enough to you, then check it. For example, John Fuller's 1979 account of Col. Henderson seeing Captain Hinchliffe reads very convincingly as a crisis apparition because he believed it without question and saw no reason to check further. But a check of *S.S. Barrabool's* timetable showed that it was a personal nightmare that occurred about a month later. Wilbur Wright's accounts of seeing the ghost of air gunner Stoker and seeing Douglas Worley shot down in flames that read with such wartime authenticity were unexpectedly disproved when trying to confirm the circumstances and dates in which each experience occurred from RAF records.

On the other hand, Samuel Clemens' precognitive dream of his brother's coffin is supported by known circumstances, as is Major McCoy's pinpointing of where Dr Mayer's stolen harp was hidden using map dowsing from 1700 miles away. Gail's dream in which she saw the person her husband had seen during a clinical visit that same afternoon, and Mrs Paquet's vision of her brother's death by drowning are supported by adequate detail.

Cases where the claim of having an ESP experience are shown as having a more likely non-ESP explanation, or not to have occurred at all, must not be taken as demonstrating that ESP is not a genuine phenomenon. The only conclusion that should be drawn is that ESP is unlikely to have occurred, or did not occur, in those individual cases.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Premonition and Precognition: The Future seen in the Present

Most people know that to have a ‘premonition’ means experiencing an uneasy, apprehensive, feeling that despite everything looking as usual, something bad is going to happen, but not what this will be. If something unexpected, such as an accident or sudden illness, does happen, then that is taken as confirming that this is what was anticipated. Sometimes the premonition is more of a sensing that you should contact someone right away, or that someone is about to contact you. Possibly fewer people will be familiar with the term ‘precognition’ which is the main subject of this chapter, but although, like premonition into which it shades, precognition refers to a future event, it does so in a more specific way. When someone has a precognition they feel they are somehow witnessing an event that will happen at some time in the future. They may forget about it as time goes on, but when witnessing or hearing about the event, or when experiencing it themselves, they remember that they had already seen the event in a vivid dream, or sometimes as a waking vision that had momentarily replaced their everyday surroundings. For example, in Chapter 3, we examined the case of Samuel Clemens. Clemens said that in a dream he had seen the body of Henry, his younger brother, dressed in one of Samuel’s suits, with a bouquet of white flowers surrounding a single red rose on his chest, lying in a metal coffin mounted on two chairs in the living room of his brother-in-law’s house. Six weeks later Henry was horribly burned when the ship’s boilers exploded. He died a few days later and what Samuel had seen in his dream came to pass in reality. None of the details leading up to his death were foreseen, just those five specific details.

For many people their precognition may be a single experience they later puzzle over, whereas others experience premonitions and precognitions again and again. The majority seem to concern impending bad news such as death, serious injury or illness concerning other people, but may specify quite trivial events that will be experienced personally, and sometimes good news as in ‘seeing’ the name of the winner of a race or that someone will win a prize or lottery. Before we look at some examples of precognitions

experienced by ordinary people, we must mention that there is a form of precognition that appears to be an ability inherited by genuine psychics, in that they can foretell what will happen in the lives of their clients, not themselves.

In Chapter one we discussed the case of Miss Phoebe Payne and the gypsy woman who was so confident in the accuracy of her foretelling that she told Miss Payne that, as described in her own words, 'within the next seven days I would receive a gift of stones, be given a ring; and on some very stony ground I would find two sprays of white heather where no other white heather grew'. That same evening her hostess gave her a box of semi-precious Cairngorm stones she had originally intended as a Christmas present; two or three days later she received a ring sent by a friend from London who had originally intended to leave it to her in her will; and at the end of the week, at her hostess's suggestion, she, with friends, climbed a hill to see a cairn, and near the top she saw an area of bare, stony ground on which were two sprays of white heather. All three events occurred in the same order as the gypsy had foretold. These events were so visually specific that it would seem that the gypsy saw them *as if* through Miss Payne's eyes. The gypsy, of course, would never know whether her foretelling was fulfilled as the two did not meet again.

When reading the following examples of confirmed precognitions it must be remembered that mainstream science, including the neurosciences and mainstream psychology, reject this as an explanation because precognition of a not yet existent future event is not possible. The universe, including ourselves, works on the principle of cause and effect in endless sequence. A car accident is the result of a series of preceding physical causes. You cannot, therefore, precognise a future car accident because the causes leading up to it have not yet happened. If, on the other hand, precognitive experiences are accepted as true occurrences, then the cause and effect objection is not telling the whole story.

Examples of Precognitions

The first case, of an anguished precognition that there will be a nearby plane crash she can do nothing to avert, was experienced by a New York woman and is quoted by Dr Richard Broughton, then Director of Research at the Institute of Parapsychology, Durham, North Carolina, in his 1983 book

Parapsychology: The Controversial Science (pp 19-20). The woman says:

> ‘I had clearly seen in a dream a plane crash at the shore of a lake and the roof of the third cottage on that dirt track in flames as a result. There was only one man and he burned up. I tried to write two overdue letters that morning but found myself telling my correspondents about my dream and the fact that the fire engine would go in by the canal route which was too narrow and be unable to get to the plane until it was too late. It was so clear that I was conscious of every plane that went over that day. Late in the afternoon the lights were on and I was at the electric range stirring something for dinner when I said “That’s the plane- the one that’s going to crash! Robert, stop the firemen before they try the canal; they have to take the basin road and they don’t know it.”
>
> My husband went outdoors to listen, and then put his head in to say “That plane’s all right” only to have me shriek “It is *not*!” Within seconds the plane crashed, the firemen took the canal route instead of the basin road, and the pilot burned to a crisp. The third cottage was only slightly damaged……and I was a wreck for weeks afterwards wondering how I could have prevented it.’

The next four cases are taken from *The Future is Now: The Significance of Premonition* (1961) by Arthur Osborne, a British writer on parapsychology (‘O’ meaning Osborne).

O1. In 1920 Mrs Pritchard married the Reverend James Pritchard, Congregational Church Minister, Herne Bay, Kent. In 1922 she had a very vivid dream in which her husband collapsed while preaching, and after pushing her way through a large crowd of people she found him lying dead behind velvet drop curtains. The dream left her feeling very anxious when he was taking services away and she told many friends. What she could not understand was seeing velvet curtains, as Congregational churches do not have velvet curtains, and she could not think of any location where he might be asked to preach that had them.

Two years later on Sunday, 9 November 1924, her husband was asked to take the service and give an Armistice address in the Pier Pavilion, Herne Bay. This was attended by over 2,500 people, with Mrs Pritchard sitting at the back with her stepdaughter. As she was searching for the last hymn she

looked up to see that he had collapsed and was being carried off the raised platform. She hurriedly pushed her way through the crowd only to find him lying dead behind green velvet drop curtains.

This same event is recounted by Dame Edith Lyttelton, who received a letter from Mrs Prichard describing her dream and its fulfilment, including the fact that after her husband's death had been confirmed as he lay there, they sounded the Last Post as he was covered by the Union Jack (*Some Cases of Premonition* (1937)).

O2. Mrs L.H, who was living in a house with several other people in Melbourne, Australia during World War One, had a vivid dream in which she was alone in the house when the doorbell rang. She went downstairs, took a letter from the postman and opened it to find that it was from a woman she hardly knew, writing from her home town in the outback where her parents still lived. On waking she could still clearly see the letter in her mind, including its heading, signature and form of writing that was unfamiliar to her. She carefully wrote out the letter from memory and showed it to several members of the house when they returned.

Some five weeks later she was upstairs alone in the house, the doorbell rang, and on answering she received and read the letter from this same woman exactly as in her dream. It suggested that she should return home as it was advisable that she should be with her parents 'under existing conditions'. Interpreting this as meaning that they may be worrying unduly about her brother, then serving in the Gallipoli campaign, she took the train back home and was met by the local clergyman. He had been notified by the War Department that her brother had been killed, and while wanting her to be with her parents, he thought a letter from him might come as a huge shock, so he had asked the lady who she knew slightly to write instead. Subsequent inquiries showed that her brother died on the same night as her dream.

O3. Mr W. K's wife (Osborne knew the couple) had a very vivid dream in which she was standing on a jetty surrounded by intensely blue water reflecting a cloudless blue sky. When she looked towards the nearby shore she saw two sailors, judged by her to be French with red pom-poms on their caps, leaning over a rail looking down across the water. The scene was so strong that she told her husband and friends and it remained unchanged in her memory.

About three years later when they were in Sydney she visited Taronga

Park Zoo, and later waited on the jetty for the return ferry boat. Shielding her eyes from the bright sunlight she glanced across the blue water towards the nearby shore and saw two sailors with their red pom poms leaning on a rail and looking down at the water, precisely as in her dream. They heard later that a French boat had docked in Sydney and the sailors had been out that day sightseeing.

O4. A music master at a public school in Surrey drove back to London once a week. One day in June, 1923, as a pupil was practising and he was following the score, the page faded away. It was replaced by a mental picture of the road he would be driving along that afternoon towards a sharp bend when a very fast car came round the corner on the wrong side of the road straight towards him. The scene then quickly faded away and he found himself looking at the score again. At the time he assumed that he had momentarily dozed off, and forgot about the vision. That afternoon, when driving to London and approaching this particular sharp bend, he suddenly remembered his 'dream', realised that if a car did come round very fast on the wrong side of the road it would hit him, and instinctively pulled over to the righthand side of the road. At the same moment a very fast car driven on the wrong side came round the corner towards him, but by turning to his right he avoided an otherwise inevitable accident. He later 'owned to having been very startled'.

The following five cases were investigated by Dr Keith Hearne, psychologist, as described in his 1989 book *Visions of the Future: The Definitive Study of Premonitions* ('H' meaning Hearne).

H1. On the night of Wednesday, 23 June 1971, Sandra, aged 17 and living in Grimsby, had a very vivid dream in which she saw the submarine *HMS Artemis* suddenly sink below the water while lying alongside a harbour wall. She 'saw a scramble of men getting off and knew that three men remained trapped inside.' She had the impression that she knew two of the trapped men and a further impression that two had died. Feeling very upset, she related her dream to her mother, noted the details in her diary (as seen by Hearne when he interviewed her), and told several friends. During the week previous to the dream, *HMS Artemis* had visited Grimsby, and Sandra and friends had been shown over the submarine and later met some of the crew at a dance.

At 7.15pm, on 1 July, eight days after her dream, when moored alongside for routine refuelling at the submarine depot, Gosport, Hampshire,

with hatches wide open, *HMS Artemis* suddenly shipped water and sank. All onboard managed to escape except for three who were trapped in a watertight torpedo storage section. After eleven hours they were rescued by divers so, unlike in Sandra's dream, no one was drowned although it had seemed a real possibility as no one knew how secure the storage section was at the time.

During the interview with Hearne Sandra reported other precognitive dreams, including seeing her brother, who could drive but didn't have a car at the time, have an accident in a red car. Soon after her dream he went to Newcastle to pick up a red car and crashed it. Another time she dreamed that Mrs Arnold, her then employer, told her that she had fallen down some stairs. A few weeks later Mrs Arnold fell down a flight of stairs in a London department store.

H2. At around midday on Saturday, 1 June 1974, Lesley Brennan, aged 24 and living in Cleethorpes, was watching television when she 'saw' a newsflash appear on the screen and heard a male voice saying that there had been an explosion at a chemical plant at Flixborough, North Lincolnshire, and several people had been killed. Shortly afterwards she told two people who were staying in the house and had come back for lunch. That evening they saw television coverage of the disaster at the large chemical plant in Flixborough, following a huge explosion with many casualties. As they testified in signed statements, Lesley had told them about the explosion at lunchtime, although it had occurred at 4:53 pm. BBC and ITV both confirmed that they had not transmitted any newsflash that lunchtime.

H3.'I woke up one morning in such a state of panic that I screamed out loud and startled my husband. I told him that two massive aircraft had crashed but not in the sky. I stood underneath one of them and people were screaming at me to help them. I knew it was at Tenerife airport and had happened on the ground. I told a few friends about my dream and it happened seven days later. I cried so much because I kept thinking - what could I have done to avoid this terrible disaster?'

Note. This was the worst crash in aviation history and occurred on 27 March 1977, at Tenerife airport, when a Boeing 747, accelerating for take-off in thick fog struck a taxi-ing Boeing 747 with the loss of 582 lives.

H4. On 9 February 1942, Mr and Mrs C stopped for the night at a small hotel in Selma, North Carolina. In the early hours Mrs C had a vivid dream in

which the hotel was reduced to burning ruins by an explosion. The dream frightened her so much that she woke up her protesting husband and insisted that they pack and leave. Next day the evening newspaper carried news that a truck, loaded with dynamite, had crashed into the hotel a few hours later, when they would still have been there, and the resulting explosion had destroyed the building.

H5. A Miss Gaskell, who told Dr Hearne that she often experienced precognitions, said: 'One of my premonitions concerned a young girl who worked for the same firm as myself. I saw the girl walking down the roadway leading to the factory gates when a van belonging to the firm passed her and the back door swung open hitting her in the face. A few weeks later this happened to her exactly as I had seen it'.

Dr Larry Dossey

In his 2009 book *The Power of Premonitions: How Knowing the Future can Shape our Lives*, Dr Larry Dossey recounts a vivid, precognitive dream that he experienced when he was a young intern. In his dream Justin, the four year old son of a colleague, was lying on his back on an examination room table screaming and fighting off a white coated technician. She was repeatedly trying to attach some gadget to his head without success and eventually became so stressed that she walked out of the room. Dossey awoke feeling very troubled by the dream, but during morning ward rounds he forgot about it until he met his colleague at lunchtime. They had just sat down when his colleague's wife came in holding a very upset and crying Justin. They had just come from the electroencephalography (EEG) room where the technician had failed to carry out the EEG test and had walked out in frustration. His colleague explained that Justin had developed a fever the day before and experienced a seizure, so through a consultant neurologist they had booked an EEG test for around midday. Justin had screamed and struggled so violently that the technician had given up and walked out.

Cases reported in the Daily Mail

Early in 2019 the *Daily Mail*'s femail magazine section printed an article by Dr Julia Mossbridge, an American neuroscientist, in which she quoted research presented in her 2018 book *The Premonition Code: The Science of Precognition, How Sensing the Future Can Change Your Life*, co-authored

with Theresa Cheung, demonstrating that precognitions really do offer glimpses of future experiences that come to pass. Readers were then asked if they had ever had such experiences. The *Daily Mail*, 4 April issue (pp 52-53) carried an article saying that it had received 'a flood of letters and emails from readers, asserting that they too have received a warning of future events.' Here are five of the letters.

Mary Robertson, Glasgow

'In April, 1987, I awoke with the utmost certainty that my father had terminal cancer. I tried to shrug it off but I couldn't. My father, then aged 70, was fit and well and thought me daft, but I insisted that he saw the GP and even drove him there. Within two weeks he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and he passed away four weeks later.

A few months after that I was standing in the kitchen peeling potatoes when I suddenly knew that my cousin's husband would pass away shortly. I literally dropped the knife and ran to phone her. A stranger answered, saying that ambulancemen were working on her husband who had collapsed. I could hear my cousin screaming, so I said "Tell her I will meet her in A&E." I reached hospital just as my cousin was told that her husband had died, aged 46, with no history of heart problems.

In November 1994, I awoke knowing that my mother would pass away within seven days. She was 73 and had dementia but was otherwise well and active. I visited her care home that day, and the manager reassured me that she was well, with no temperature and there was nothing to make the staff concerned. I went home but became so uneasy that I phoned an undertaker and went back to the home to leave instructions for when she passed away. I think the staff believed that I was having some sort of breakdown. I even contacted friends and relatives suggesting that they visit her.

Most said they "would leave it until the weekend" while others reminded me how well she had been. After six days even I was beginning to think that that it must be my imagination, but as I sat reading in bed with the clock approaching midnight the phone rang. I started getting dressed – I knew who was calling before my husband picked it up. My mother had

passed away in her sleep.

Have there been others? Yes, sometimes friends, sometimes strangers I have merely brushed against in the supermarket perhaps. Quite suddenly I have been overwhelmed by a sense of sadness about to descend on them, or the emotional pain they will suffer for a relative. I walk away feeling that I have intruded into their life. This “awareness” is not something I asked for, nor is it a blessing.’”

Geraldine Cetin. Pool

'The night before the 2011 tsunami in Japan I had an incredibly vivid dream that I was in a bus on a country road when a huge wave appeared. The wave engulfed the bus, rapidly rising to the windows. I was terrified and knew I wouldn’t escape. In the morning I told my partner as I couldn’t shake off my terror. A few hours later the news began to break of the tsunami. One piece of footage showed the wave engulfing a bus on a coastal road exactly as I’d “experienced” it. I went cold. I’ve never travelled in that part of the world or even thought about it.

I’ve had other precognitions and they are not always foretelling tragedy – some are inane, like the time I was in a theatre performance. The night before I had a vivid dream that a child actor was sick on the stage and we had to stop the play, and that’s exactly what happened.'

Heide Nemesh

'On the morning of 10 September 2001, I woke up feeling very unsettled after a dream about a plane crashing into a building. I asked my husband if he had seen a plane crash on the news but he said he hadn’t. I told him about my dream of a crash and people falling. I rarely dream, so something this vivid quite upset me. It stayed with me all day – I felt uneasy and mentioned it at work to my colleagues. At the time I was a staff nurse in a day surgery unit. The next day, 11 September 2001, a colleague called me into a room where a TV was showing the horrific terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York. It took my breath away as it was my dream from the day before. My colleague said, “Oh my goodness, that’s what you were telling us yesterday!” I was glued to

the TV like the rest of the world. I was quite shaken as it was so similar. If I hadn't told so many people about it the day before I don't think I would have believed it myself.'

William, Dorset

'I was visiting a new customer who lived in a bungalow in Dorset. I walked in and, bizarrely, the words "sugared almonds and liquorice, Mr Boakes" just blurted out of me. Mr Boakes said nothing but walked into his kitchen and from the top shelf took down a Tupperware container of sugared almonds and liquorice. I then closed my eyes and saw a short man with a flat cap and round glasses and covered in black dust. I related this and Mr Boakes was amazed – I had described his late father who was a coalman. I have had hundreds of experiences like this. They tend to occur in dreams or when my mind is at rest.'

Martin Redwood, Gwent

'Many years ago I booked tickets to a Pink Floyd concert at the Crystal Palace. Beforehand I dreamed about the event with disturbing accuracy, although I had no previous knowledge of the venue. In my dream the stage was fronted by a river of swirling mist. Pink Floyd were playing a song unfamiliar to me but upon waking the tune stayed in my head. Imagine my surprise when I reached the venue. There was no river but a sizeable lake by the stage and dry ice blocks were thrown in creating a swirling mist. When Pink Floyd struck up a new song it was instantly recognizable to me from my dream of the song. It was only much later that I learned it was called *Embryo*. It was not released on a studio album until 1983 and the concert was in 1971!

Over the years I have also dreamed correctly about crashing my motorcycle, a remote uncle turning up locally for a job interview, and sudden snowfall after a hot October day. The dreams were extremely vivid and so different from the usual muddled stuff dreams are made of. I'm convinced something we don't fully understand really exists, but I have made conscious efforts over the years to shut out my precognitions as they make me feel uncomfortable. I'm now 67 and it is something I had cast aside - until, that is, I read your recent article and realised that I was not alone. Thanks for sharing.

What features do precognitive experiences possess in common?

The large number of published accounts of premonitions and precognitions considered to have been confirmed by later events appear to possess certain features that mark them out as distinct from ordinary experiences, including ordinary dreams. Such features are referred to by the late psychologist and parapsychologist Lawrence LeShan in his book *A New Science of the Paranormal* (2009) as 'observables' defining an area of study.

- Whether occurring as a vivid dream remembered on waking, or when momentarily supervening on everyday sensory reality, these experiences are always unexpected.
- They are disconnected from the circumstances of everyday experiencing as supplied by sensory input at the time.
- They are unusually vivid and intense and often accompanied by an unshakeable certainty that what has been precognised will occur.
- Excluding psychics, they always refer to what will be experienced by the experient, or others observing or being involved in the scene, that closely mirrors what has been previsioned.
- Precognitions never refer to the then unknown cause of illness, accident or death such as a heart attack or mechanical failure, only to events as experienced by those involved as a result of the then unknown cause.
- The event that is precognised occurs in normal causal sequence of time but without preceding or subsequent context, like a momentarily illuminated section of film or video clip of an event. It starts and stops without causal continuity beyond itself.
- Waking precognitions usually occur when the experient is in a relaxed state of mind, as when performing a routine task or activity or when resting, and the precognised scene momentarily replaces the everyday present.
- Precognitions are reported as being a form of experiencing very distinct from normal experiencing.

Occasionally a dreamed precognitive experience is shared, as in a case recounted by Hearne (1989) in which two elderly sisters living in a lonely house had the same precognitive dream, on three successive nights, of a man knocking on their door one evening to ask if they needed a sewing machine mended (they didn't). This occurred exactly as precognised during the fourth evening (pp 57-58). Hearne also found that what he termed as 'media

announcement premonitions' that are superimposed on television or radio, such as Lesley Brennan's lunchtime television newsflash, or newspaper headlines, or on placards or notices seen when driving past, were very accurate. As for the incidence in the general population, Hearne quotes surveys indicating that about 30% of the population have reported experiencing a later recognised premonition/precognition. The real incidence is almost certainly much higher, as many such experiences, especially when they involve fairly trivial events, are probably dismissed as odd coincidences and soon forgotten. The one feature that all such experiences possess that lifts them out of everyday normality is that att the moment of later confirmation these experiences, which beforehand were open to a range of possible, everyday, explanations, fall outside the explanatory framework of cause and effect.

Evidential validity

While acceptance of many such accounts must assume the honesty and accuracy of the informant, as with Mary Robertson's letter to the *Daily Mail*, in many cases the evidence prior to the occurrence of the predicted event is in the form of being noted down and dated, as in diaries, postmarked envelopes and dated letters, email correspondence and/or other people signing statements to the effect that they knew of the prediction before it occurred. Such documents fulfil the evidential requirement for precognition that the scene described by the experient, and what occurred later, closely matched what had been foreseen, and could not have been predicted from information available at the time.

Discussion

While accounts of precognition occur throughout recorded history, systematic investigation through population surveys, questionnaires and structured interviews really started after the formation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. Since then thousands of precognitions have been logged and categorised and many articles and books written. As pointed out earlier, the main obstacle for scientific acceptance is that precognition violates the principle of causation, that a cause always precedes its effect and never the other way round, as this is a physical impossibility. Change is initiated by a causal 'push' from 'behind', as it were, whereas precognition implies that the

precognised event has somehow ‘reached back’ to affect the present moment in which the precognitive experience occurred, a phenomenon known as retrocausation. The event-to-be has somehow acted as a reverse cause and effect by exerting a selective ‘pull’ on those causes and effects that will eventually result in the precognised event.

This implies that the precognised event, and therefore its antecedent causes, somehow exists in some dimension of space and time other than the causal time that we, and everything around us, seem to be living in. Eric Wargo, in his 2018 book *Time Loops: Precognition, Retrocausation, and the Unconscious* is a strong advocate of this theory. There are two ways to interpret the precognitive experience: either it is a precognitive glimpse across causal time to an event in the future, and the two experiences are separate events, or the future event has acted ‘backwards’ as the cause of the present experience, so they are somehow linked together.

Many ingenious theories have been formulated to get round the causal objection, usually by invoking the strange world of quantum physics as Wargo does. There our familiar cause and effect sequence breaks down into Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, apparently solid matter dissolves into 99.9999% recurring energy fields, subatomic ‘wavicles’ possess the potential to become waves or particles according to what the detector is designed to detect. Before physical detection they exist as unknowable ‘wave functions’, and causal time disappears into statistical probabilities. For example, while unstable atoms in a radioactive substance such as uranium will break down at a fixed rate over time, which will be the next atom to break down is unknowable in principle.

Dean Radin (2006) and Jon Taylor (2020) also explore quantum reality in search of an explanation for psi phenomena. I am not qualified to engage in this debate, but quantum reality is best expressed in terms of equations, whereas it seems to me that the *mental* world in which we live and in which *psi* phenomena occurs is physically undetectable and equationless.

Mental experiences

If premonitions and precognitions are accepted as factual occurrences beyond reasonable doubt, then they occur in a reality that is not bound by the laws of physics. Precognitions are *mental experiences,* not physical events, so the laws and equations of physics are irrelevant. The physical sciences, including

the neurophysiological activity of the brain that we now know in great detail, can offer no explanation for *mental experiencing* because there is nothing in the physical world that possesses the property of *experiencing.* There is no physical equation for *experiencing* so, as far as physics is concerned, *experiencing* does not even exist, but we know it does because we are the *experiencers.*

We have to accept that we have no idea what we actually mean when we talk of the *mind* with its *consciousness, sense of self, sense of time, sensations, thoughts, emotions* and *beliefs* because we have no way of objectively examining the *mind* as a separate object, as we do with the brain because the *mind* is object-less. All we know is that we exist, not in a physical reality obedient to physical laws and equations, but in an *experiential reality* that possesses completely different properties from physical reality.

A summing up

The argument presented here is that if precognition is accepted as a fact, as the evidence demonstrates, then this implies that our everyday, cause and effect reality is not the only reality. The problem is that we have difficulty in escaping from visualising everything, including time, as occurring in the three dimensions of space. The sequence of past events tend to be visualised as extending along a spatial ine of time away from us into the past, so that the Romans are further away from us than the Victorians. We visualise the future as extending ahead in a continuation of the same timeline, so this year's booked holiday is nearer to us than next year's holiday. Our great grandparents are further away than our grandparents. But this is purely our imaginative, spatial projection, based upon our experience of the everyday world of space and movement. The term 'precognition' implies that we have pre-cognised an event-to-be that we will later cognise when we 'get there' at the precognitised time. But at the time of experiencing a precognition it seems to co-exist with the present in which it is being experienced.

We do not, as yet, possess a concept that makes sense of precognition, possibly because this term, based upon our past-into-present, linear way of thinking, is the wrong concept. The same problem arises when psychics contact and know the minds of clients who they have never met, and who might be hundreds of miles away. When in the psi state of mind physical

distance apart is irrelevant during the reading, and linear time does not apply.

References

Broughton, R. (1983) *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science.*

Dossey, L. (2009) *The Power of Premonitions: How Knowing the Future can Shape our Lives.* London, Hay House

Hearne, K. (1989) *Visions of the Future: The Definitive Study of Premonitions.* Wellingborough, UK. The Aquarian Press.

Le Shan, L. (2009) *A New Science of the Paranormal: The Promise of Psychical Research.* Wheaton, Ill. Theosophical Publishing.

Lyttelton, Edith (1937) *Some Cases of Prediction: A Study.* London. G. Bell & Sons.

Radin, D. (2009) *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in Quantum Reality.* New York, Paraview.

Osborne, A,W. (1961) *The Future is Now: The Significance of Precognition.* New York, University Books.

Taylor, J. (2020) *Contact with the Future: The Nature of Extrasensory Perception*. Independently published.

Vargo, E. (2018) *Time Loops: Precognition, Retrocausation, and the Unconscious.* San Antonio, Anomalist Books.

CHAPTER TWENTY

When four Intuitives read Dr Mayer's mind and she found her sister's missing watch

We first met Dr Mayer in Chapter 16, where we read the story of her daughter's stolen harp, and how it was located at an address in Oakland by Major McCoy, 1800 miles away in Fayettesville, Arkansas, through map dowsing, and eventually returned. For Mayer, this experience changed everything she thought she knew about the mind and launched her into a long investigation into ESP and related psi phenomena such as healing. In this chapter we will be exploring the implications of her experiences with psychics, or intuitives, and her own strange and completely unexpected experience.

After testing many self-styled psychics without success, Dr Mayer eventually contacted four psychics, or intuitives as they would rather be called, who had been recommended by colleagues for the accuracy of their readings. After she had tested their intuitive ability by checking the accuracy of the information they provided during the reading, she asked each of them to describe the state of mind they were in when giving a reading. Did it differ from when they were just talking with people about everyday affairs?

They all said that it was decisively different from their everyday state of mind, and the following is a summary of what each of the intuitives - Deb Mangelus, Dr John Huddleston, Helen Palmer and Ellen Tadd – said concerning their intuitive state of mind, in which they experienced a *direct knowing* of their client and no one else. I have termed this the *psi knowing* state of mind, and have used italics to emphasise the difference when in this state of mind compared to the everyday state of mind.

Deb Mangelus.

With Deb Mangelus we have her initial response and explanation of her procedure when in her everyday mindset on answering the telephone, hearing her unknown client's first name, and agreeing to do a tape-recorded reading. Her transition from her everyday state of mind into her *psi knowing* mindset specific to that client then follows. Mangelus, who at the time lived in Cape Cod on the east coast, some 2,700 miles (4345 km) from Oakland city, San Francisco where Mayer lived, first asked whether Mayer wanted to describe the problems she would like her to focus on, or to say nothing and for her to just say whatever she saw in her mind during the reading. After Dr Mayer had chosen the second option as the more stringent test, Mangelus said, 'Fine. I'll take a few seconds *to be sure it is you I am seeing* (my italics) then I'll say whatever comes to me. The whole session will be recorded and I'll mail you the tape when I'm done.' After a brief pause during which she transitioned from her everyday mindset into her *psi knowing* mindset in order "*to be sure it is you I am seeing*" she went on to describe in correct detail Mayer's current circumstances, including a choice that she and a fellow interviewer needed to make between two very different women for the role of managing director of an arts foundation.

After describing one candidate (who happened to have a huge mop of red hair) as an exciting and fiery personality, who had trouble with words and may not always be reliable, Mangelus said of the other candidate: 'she is different - really different. Very responsible, dutiful and orderly. *The funniest thing is happening…..I keep seeing her hands and they are clasped in her lap. I simply can't get her to unclasp her hands*' (my italics). This specific detail was true, as to Mayer and her co-interviewer's astonishment, throughout the interview this candidate had sat straight and unmoving with her hands clasped firmly in her lap. Dr Mayer had made a note of this to discuss with her co-interviewer before making a decision. During later interviews with Mayer as to her *psi knowing* state of mind, Mangelus said that 'I know what I know about the other person because *I go where they are*. I really am *seeing with their eyes when I read them*.'

Dr John Huddleston

Dr John Huddleston was a fellow academic who Mayer knew by sight at academic meetings, but not on a personal basis as they worked in different areas of psychology and in different departments. During their first telephone

reading he gave her a description of what a very close family member was doing that seemed so unlikely and so profoundly disturbing that she refused to accept it, saying that she was sure that he must be wrong. Despite her denials he continued to assure her that, distressing though the information was, he knew he was correct. Twelve days later his reading was confirmed and Mayer's family life changed for ever. Mayer does not say what that family member had been doing. Huddleston told Dr Mayer that for him the intuitive mindset was one of 'putting my everyday self aside and *entering into* a *relaxed focus which has a calm clarity, and a receptive quality. I'm in communion with the client and they are very easy to see, but I don't merge with them in order to read them. Doing a reading is as effortless as opening a gate and stepping into a new landscape - the client's health, relationships, family, joys, challenges and future – they are all there.*'

Helen Palmer

During a first telephone reading Helen Palmer provided correct details of an article that Dr Mayer was trying to write without success, and gave clear clues as to the subject of the article that she would eventually publish successfully. Palmer said that for her, 'intuition operates from a very different state of mind than ordinary consciousness: quite decisively different. *You lose awareness of the room, your body, your face. That all goes but there is a separate awareness that stays. You read another person accurately because you are them, you know them from the inside because you've stopped being separate*.' She said that she had learned to leave her everyday state of mind in which we remain separate from other people, and once in her intuitive state of mind she entered into a state of clairvoyance in which '*I can locate people at a distance or at different points in time within a greater reality that embraces us both.*'

Ellen Tadd

Ellen Tadd, who did palm readings, told Mayer that she left her everyday state of mind and entered into her *psi knowing* state of mind when she took her client's right hand, preparatory to commencing the reading. During her first reading with Mayer Tadd correctly described some difficulties in personal confidence that one of Mayer's two daughters was undergoing at the time. For her second reading Mayer, who was planning a research project and

needed a co-researcher, named five academics who, based upon their research records, she was thinking of approaching, and asked Tadd ‘to assess the virtues and liabilities of each’ in the order they had been given. For the first three names Tadd accurately described what Mayer knew about them, but for the fourth person, who Mayer had never met, Tadd said that she ‘simply couldn’t find him’ and then went on to correctly describe the fifth person.

Four weeks later, not having received a reply to her invitation, Mayer telephoned the fourth possible candidate, only to be told by a secretary that he had died unexpectedly six weeks earlier. Concerning her intuitive state of mind Tadd said that on taking her client’s right hand to do a reading, she left the everyday world in which we are separate from each other, and entered into a ‘*clairvoyant state of oneness with the client during which you get a very profound knowing.*' (For full details, including the personal histories of the four intuitives, see Mayer, 2007, pp 42-55).

Dr Mayer’s involuntary experience of *psi knowing*.

After discussing what her four intuitives had told her concerning their state of mind, Mayer goes on to say: ‘suddenly, and bizarrely, I remember a strange, disassociated moment: a moment when for the first and only time in my life, I might have experienced exactly what that knowing is like.’ Sometime previously Mayer's husband had given her 17 year old sister a present of a gold watch after she had come to stay with them. To her husband’s exasperated and obvious annoyance her sister repeatedly mislaid the watch and they found themselves searching for it ‘yet again.’ On this occasion, when Mayer had returned from work before her husband, she found her sister becoming increasingly frantic to find it before he came home. They methodically checked every room, stairs and passageway that she had been in during the day without success. There was nowhere else to look; and then something very unexpected happened

> ‘that was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I was standing in our upstairs hall near the closed door of my husband’s study. *I walked into his study: deliberately, intentionally, but with no awareness of volition on my part. It was as though I was watching myself in a slow-motion film. I walked straight to a closet in the far corner of the room, a closet I’d entered maybe twice – if that - over the course of our entire marriage. As I walked I wasn’t aware of thinking, of deciding, or of*

> *choosing to do, any of the things I was doing or was about to do. I was just doing them. I bent down – again it felt absolutely deliberate – and reached deep into the closet behind a row of shoes, then behind some boxes behind the shoes. My hand went directly to a small leather case in the very back corner. I lifted the case, stood up, and opened it. Inside was the watch. Weirdly, I felt neither surprise nor excitement. I simply expected it.* I then walked out of my husband's study, called for my sister, and showed her the watch.' (my italics)

Her sister then asked where on earth she had found it, and when told expressed utter disbelief as she had not been in his study so it could not possibly have been in there. Guessing that her husband had found it and had done this to teach her careless sister a lesson, Mayer put it back and told her not to say anything.

On her husband's return home Mayer told him that her sister had mislaid her watch and they had searched for it in vain, but without mentioning that she had found it. In reply he said that after she had gone to work he had found it lying in the bathroom and had decided to hide it in the closet in his study to teach the sister a lesson, something that neither Mayer nor her sister could possibly have known. He then went to fetch it. Mayer summed up her experience by saying '*I didn't decide to walk into my husband's study…it felt more like I was being walked somehow by the experience*.' (Mayer, 2007, pp 58-59)

A working hypothesis

The four intuitives agree that to do a successful reading they must first transition into a different state of mind from the everyday state, and it seems that without even realising it Dr Mayer transitioned into the same state of mind in which she *knew* where the watch was hidden. This implies that there are two states of mind that are very different from each other, and as a working hypothesis it is proposed that one is the everyday state, and the other is what I have termed the '*psi knowing* state', and I have marked the difference between the two by italics. For purpose of discussion the first requirement is to define what is meant here by these two terms.

The Everyday State of Mind

This is the familiar, everyday, state of conscious awareness of bodily self and the outside world in which reception of new information is dependent upon prior stimulation of the body's sensory system as in sight and sound, smell, taste and touch. In the everyday state no new information to brain, and then from brain to mind, is possible unless our senses are first activated. The world 'out there' in which we live and move is experienced as existing in complete independence of ourselves as observers. It remains unaffected by our wish to affect it, however strong our desire to do so. When we need to interact with the external world we have to apply some form of bodily energy to effect change. All branches of scientific discovery are based on this sensory dependent state of mind for receiving new information, and scientific theory in general, including mainstream psychology, takes this sensory dependent state of mind as the one and only norm.

The *Psi Knowing* State of Mind

This state of mind is experienced as separate from the everyday state of mind. When voluntarily induced, as with Mayer's intuitives, the experiencer finds that they have direct mental access to new information not accessible through their sensory system, so not accessible to their everyday state of mind. During an *ESP* experience, whether of *telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition* or *retrocognitio*n, the experiencer is in the *psi* state of mind. Mediums voluntarily enter the *psi* state in the belief that they are communicating with the dead, when it seems more likely that, like Mayer's intuitives, they are in telepathic communication with the mind of the sitter as discussed in Chapter 2.

The *psi knowing* state may be entered involuntarily during sleep, as in a precognitive *psi dream* remembered on waking, as with Samuel Clemens (chapter 4 or in Gail's Dream (chapter 9), or in a *psi vision* as with Agnes Paquet (chapter 7) when it momentarily supervened on everyday surroundings. The gypsy woman was in a state of *psi knowing* when she read the hand of Phoebe Payne (chapter 1), as was Major McCoy when *psi dowsing* for the stolen harp (chapter 16. As Guy Playfair discovered (chapter 13), about a third of identical twins appear to be united by a background *psi* state of mind that can be activated into conscious awareness in emergency.

As with Mayer's intuitives, when reflecting upon how they felt during an *ESP* experience, the one feature repeatedly commented upon by experiencers is that they were definitely in a different state of mind to everyday experiencing. When in that different state of mind they *just knew*, and this sense *of just knowing* felt very different from their everyday sense of knowing about someone or something.

This *psi* sense of *just knowing* will be explored further in chapter 21, where we will be discussing how animals seem to use *psi knowing* in response to a strongly felt sense of need, whether it is to find their way home, or find water and food, or migrate across hundreds of miles.

Reference

Mayer, E.L. (2007). *Extraordinary Knowing and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind.* New York. Bantam Books.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Animal Psi: Alpha minds, the homing instinct and migratory impulse

A major problem on the Western front during World War One was maintaining communication between what was happening in the front line, and those planning strategy in headquarters often miles behind the lines. Communication by telephone was unpredictable as the telephone wires were frequently disrupted. In his article on the homing instincts of dogs, biologist and animal behaviourist Michael Nahm (2015) describes how the British army decided to use this homing instinct to carry messages to, and from, the trenches. It set up training schools to select those dogs that could consistently find their way back over many miles of strange territory to their beloved owners and were even able to find them after they had moved from where they had last parted.

Once the dogs were trained, their owners were stationed at headquarters and the dogs taken to the front. After front line messages had been attached to them, they were released to find their way back across war torn, muddy wastelands full of shell holes and dead bodies, fields and woods, past columns of marching men, trucks and guns, and in all weathers.

The nature of this homing instinct, present in many species and most studied in dogs, has been the subject of much research. While sight and smell obviously helps once back in familiar territory, none of a homing animal's normal senses are of any help when taken and released in unfamiliar surroundings, so they must be using some other sense that is activated by their intense need to be reunited with home, whether 'home' in their minds is a particular place, or a person, or both together. As will be discussed later, the term used here for this other sense is *psi knowing*, and italics are used here to emphasise the difference between *psi knowing* and everyday senses.

The proposed working hypothesis, as defined in chapter 20, is that in answer to a strong, driving need, often for survival, which the everyday senses cannot fulfil, *psi knowing* takes over and acts as an internal guide in the sense of the animal being on *psi autopilot* until their destination is

reached.

Dr Joseph. B. Rhine, the pioneer of experimental parapsychology from Duke University, collected verified cases of animal homing, again mainly dogs, and coined the term ‘psi trailing’ (Rhine and Feather, 1962). In one of their cases Tony, a mixed breed dog belonging to the Doolen family who lived in Aurora, Illinois, was left behind with a new family when the Doolens moved some 200 miles eastward, around the southern tip of Lake Michigan, to the small town of East Lansing. After a few days Tony disappeared from his new home and his new owners searched for him in vain. Some six weeks later, when the Doolens were out shopping, Tony bounded up to them in the high street and they were reunited. Besides the recognizable markings on his coat, his identity was confirmed by his collar, in which Mr Doolen had cut a deep notch.

Rhine’s most astonishing case, however, was that of Sugar, a cream coloured Persian cat belonging to a Californian family who moved from California to a new home in Oklahoma some 1000 miles (1609 km) away. As they were waving goodbye to neighbours she jumped out of the car, but was eventually caught and then cared for by friends. A few days later, however, Sugar disappeared from her California home, and after a while it was assumed that she was dead. But, to her owners' astonishment, she turned up at their new home about a year later, after travelling through 1000 miles of unfamiliar territory. She arrived tired, bedraggled and paw sore, but was immediately recognised both by her appearance and behaviour and conclusively by a bone deformity of her left hip.

Dr Rupert Sheldrake (2011) provides the following examples. At the outbreak of WW1 James Brown, who had a devoted half Irish terrier, half collie, called Prince, enrolled in the 1st North Staffordshire regiment, and after basic training the regiment sailed to France in September, 1914. Prince was left with his wife in County Cork, who then moved to England to live in Hammersmith, London. Prince, who had been inconsolable after James had left, disappeared the day after she had moved in, and after she had searched in vain she wrote to James to give him the bad news. A fortnight after disappearing James was returning to his quarters in Armentières when a friend called out to say that Prince had turned up, and they were reunited in a frenzy of delight.

Because this seemed such an impossible story, the commanding officer

had James and Prince paraded in front of him next morning as evidence that Prince really had found his way from Hammersmith to be reunited with Private James Brown. He became the regiment's mascot, was given a coat made from an old army jacket and had his own identity disc. It seems that Prince had attached himself to troops on their way over to France, and then, after disembarking, had set off on his own to find James. The good news is that they stayed together and survived the war, returning to England in May, 1919. In another example, a two year old sheep dog was left with new owners in Bethune, northeast France when his owner, a construction worker, decided to leave home and travel 500 miles south to work in Avignon, southeast France. A few weeks later, while working on the construction site, he was astonished to see his sheepdog as it raced up to join him.

The following case demonstrates the *psi knowing* instinct at work to achieve an unusual outcome. It all started at a cattle sale in Hatherleigh market, Devon, UK. Blackie, a two year old heifer and her few months' old calf were separated for good when they were sold to new owners. Blackie was bedded down for the night with hay and water at Bob Woolacott's farm near Okehampton, while her calf went to join Arthur Sleeman's farm at Sampford Courtney, some seven miles away. During the night Blackie escaped out of Woolacott's farmyard and was found next morning at Arthur Sleeman's farm suckling her calf. Both still had their auction tickets stuck on their rumps.

It is worth considering this case further. Blackie had probably known only the enclosed farm and fields in which her calf had been born. She and her calf would have been taken to market in separate trucks, sold when in separate pens, and taken to their new farms by truck. Blackie could not possibly know where her calf was, or even where she was in relationship to where she had lived. All she felt was an overpowering need to be reunited with her calf. This need activated her *psi knowing* state of mind that took over and guided her along unfamiliar territory to Arthur Sleeman's farm, where she somehow broke in and found her calf. This case, by implication, raises troubling questions about what cows and calves may feel after forced separation.

In a really unusual case a tired racing pigeon touched down in the back yard of the sheriff of Summersville, Virginia. Spotted and then fed by the sheriff's twelve year old son, it stayed and became his firm pet. Some months

later the boy was admitted to the Myers Memorial Hospital at Phillipi, some 70 miles away as the pigeon flies, for an operation. One dark evening, about a week later, the boy heard a bird fluttering against the window. To humour him the nurse opened the window and the bird flew in. He recognised it as his pet racing pigeon and asked her to see if the ring on its leg was numbered 167. It was.

The most remarkable case of homing on record is that of Bobbie, a two year old Scotch Collie/English Shepherd, owned by Americans Frank and Elizabeth Brazier and their daughters, Leona and Nova. In August 1923 they were visiting relatives in Wolcott, Indiana, when Bobbie was attacked by three other dogs and ran away. After a fruitless search the heartbroken Brazier family returned home to Silverton, in Marion County, Oregon - a western journey of some 2,600 miles (4190 km). Six months later, in February 1924, Bobbie returned home, mangy, scrawny and exhausted, with his toenails worn down to the pads. To do this incredible journey Bobbie had left Wolcott, Indiana, which lies south of Lake Michigan in mid America, and travelled due westward across the flat lands of Illinois and Iowa, then across the Great Plains of Nebraska, then the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming and Idaho, and the lower, but still mountainous terrain of Oregon - swimming across rivers and tracking through deserts to reach home. And he did this through autumn and winter.

Bobbie became nationally famous, and with the aid of people who had fed him and looked after him until he travelled off again on his homeward journey, the Humane Society of Portland, Oregon was able to track his route, estimating that he had travelled some 3000 miles (4830 km). This included visiting each service station where the Braziers had spent the night on their return journey. He became known as Bobbie the Wonder Dog, played himself in the 1924 silent film The Call of the West, and on his death in 1927 he was buried with honours in the Oregon Humane Society's pet cemetery in Portland.

Dog Homing Experiments

With these examples in mind, we need to return to German biologist Dr Michael Narm. He describes a series of successful experiments on the homing instinct carried out by Dr Bernhard Muller (1965), in which a total of 75 dogs were taken to sites far from home, and released from their baskets;

their subsequent behaviour was then noted by trained observers over a large number of trial runs. Prior to the trials Muller had carefully assessed each dog's pack status and personality, categorising them into dominant alpha, submissive omega, and intermediary dogs, and in doing so he made an absolutely crucial finding. Of the 26 dogs that completed all the homing trials successfully over unknown territory from a variety of starting positions, 22 dogs were alpha dominant and 4 dogs were upper intermediary. None of the remaining 49 (65%) lower intermediary or omega dogs demonstrated any homing instinct; they ran around feeling lost and eventually sought sanctuary by attaching themselves to nearby human company or other dogs.

When released from their baskets, all the dogs naturally used their senses to try and discover where they were, running around, scanning their surroundings and sniffing everything. The lower intermediary and omega dogs eventually gave up and looked for comfort from whoever was nearby. In complete contrast, the behaviour of the 22 successful alpha and upper intermediary dogs dramatically changed. They stopped searching and began to point in different directions, increasingly pointing towards home and eventually only towards home. At that moment their bodily posture changed completely. They held their heads high 'in a peculiarly stiff manner' and while in that posture they started trotting purposefully in a homeward direction. To observers their eyes appeared 'somewhat veiled' and unfocussed as if not actually looking at anything. While moving in this stiff posture they deliberately avoided people and other dogs, often stumbled on uneven ground, and sometimes even collided with low wire fences. Visual orientation played no part in their journey, and they made no attempt to smell. In fact, it was found that they performed best on very dark nights or in dense mist when visual input was minimal. Muller says that during their return home they behaved as if 'ridden by an alien force' that had taken them over.

It seems that these successful alpha and upper intermediary dogs transitioned from their everyday, non psi, sensory dependent state of mind that could not solve their problem, to a non-sensory based *psi knowing* state of mind in which they clairvoyantly knew where home and/or their owner was, and they remained on *psi autopilot* until they reached home and everyday sensory life took over again in familiar surroundings

If this is the correct explanation for the homing instinct, it seems

reasonable to infer from these findings that alpha pack leaders of whatever species, whether dogs, wolves, or elephant herd matriarchs, possess the ability to transition from a sensory based mindset sufficient for everyday needs, into a *psi knowing* mindset in response to group survival need, as in urgently seeking new pastures and water. It is this, possibly inborn, ability to enter the *psi* mindset that distinguishes the dominant alphas from their omega followers. All the latter need to do is to follow their alpha leader, so they remain in their everyday, sensory mindset sufficient for everyday survival needs.

Discussion

Thousands of dogs, cats and other animals go missing every year and never return, many attaching themselves to new owners. On the other hand, as discussed by Sheldrake (2011), there are hundreds of validated accounts of animals, mainly dogs and sometimes cats, who have been sold and relocated to a new home, or were lost during a journey, that have eventually returned to their original home and owners often over many miles. Some, and this particularly applies to dogs, when left behind with new owners, have escaped and eventually tracked their original owners to their new location for which they would have had no sensory cues.

With Muller's findings in mind, it seems likely that these successful returnees would have been classified by their owners as alpha dominant personalities, and this seems to have been the case with Blackie the cow. In Australia, overly aggressive crocodiles occupying outback swimming holes have been captured, transported by helicopters and released on the coast hundreds of miles away only to find their way back weeks later. Sheldrake quotes one case in which the displaced crocodile returned to his home pool eleven days later after swimming an estimated 20 miles a day for some 240 miles around the northern tip of Australia (Sheldrake, 2011, pp 188-9).

Dr Mayer and '*Psi Knowing*'

In Chapter 20, Dr Mayer provided unwitting support for the proposed transition from an everyday state of mind into a *psi knowing* state of mind activated by acute need, and it is worth recapping her experience. After searching in vain for her distraught younger sister's gold watch, Mayer had stopped and was standing still on the landing outside her husband's closed

study door. Suddenly, she says, she opened the door and *walked into his study: deliberately, intentionally, but with no awareness of volition on my part …. I wasn't aware of thinking, of deciding, or of choosing to do, any of the things I was doing or was about to do. I was just doing them. I bent down – again it felt absolutely deliberate – and reached deep into the closet behind a row of shoes, then behind some boxes behind the shoes. My hand went directly to a small leather case in the very back corner. I lifted the case, stood up, and opened it. Inside was the watch. Weirdly, I felt neither surprise nor excitement. I simply expected it.* She summed up her experience by saying, *I didn't decide to walk into my husband's study…it felt more like I was being walked somehow by the experience.*

During the whole experience she was not in her normal, everyday, state of mind. Some other state of mind had taken over. Compare her comment that *it felt more like I was being walked somehow by the experience* with Muller's comment that the alpha and upper intermediate dogs heading home behaved as if '*ridden by an alien force*'. Like Dr Mayer, it seems that they had transitioned into a mental state of being on *psi autopilot.*

Migration

If this proposed ability to enter into a *psi knowing* state of mind when activated by a survival need is accepted, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, as with homing behaviour, migratory birds enter a seasonal period of compulsive flying, and mentally transition from their everyday senses into the mindset of *psi knowing* the *end destination point* of their journey. On arrival they revert back to normal. During migration they remain on *psi autopilot* until this end destination point is reached, with intervals of stops to feed and rest. If, as seems likely, navigation includes use of the earth's magnetic fields and/or the position of the stars this, of itself, does not explain the drive to migrate to a given area, but while on *psi autopilot* they may be sensitive to them as directional aids until they reach their psi-determined destination. It is proposed that this sense of *psi knowing* is what guides, for example, swallows and house martins back to the same nest under the eaves each year after thousands of miles of flight.

The migratory bird's-eye frame of reference

When a bird is in flight two frames of reference are involved: the physical as

in flying, and the mental in the form of the visual sense. In the physical frame of reference, which is normally used when discussing migration, the migrating bird, like all flying objects from hitting a golf ball to flying a jet, flies over the intervening stationary ground from A to B. But once launched into flight this is not the visual frame of reference, or bird's-eye view of what is happening, as everyone knows who has ever been on a swing as the ground alternately rises to meet you or falls away.

When flying low in a glider or aeroplane, trees, buildings, hills or mountains are seen as rushing towards, then under, and then away from you, because your static visual frame of reference is now the framework of the glider or aeroplane surrounding you, that remains your constant visual point. When flying high, you are not sensed as moving but the earth is seen as passing slowly beneath you. If you are flying in formation, as many migratory birds do, then visually that formation relative to you is your stationary frame of reference, and the ground below is moving relative to your formation.

When a bird is on the ground then, like us, it sees birds flying overhead as moving relative to its stationary self. The moment the same bird takes wing its visual frame of reference is transformed into one of seeing itself with wings flapping up and down either side as a constant bodily reference, and the ground below and everything on it moving towards or away from it. Imagine a crow flying at 20 mph (32 km) at both groundspeed and airspeed towards the tree where its nest is. It sees the tree steadily getting nearer, until it is enveloped by a gust of wind blowing in the opposite direction at 30 mph (48 km) groundspeed. The crow's airspeed remains the same, so it doesn't feel any different, but its groundspeed is now 10 mph (16 km) in the opposite direction, so the crow suddenly sees the tree and its nest receding away from it. In response it automatically increases its airspeed until its groundspeed is fast enough for the tree to be approaching again, and it eventually reaches its nest.

Migration then, from the bird's point of view, can be considered as a seasonally induced, irresistible urge to fly in a given *psi knowing* direction, usually in migratory flocks, and if the theory proposed here is correct, that urge switches on its *psi autopilot* until the earth, turning beneath it as the bird sees it, brings the required new feeding grounds into sight. As it touches down its *psi autopilot* switches off, and everyday senses take over again.

If this proposed hypothesis is correct, then *psi knowing* probably applies to all forms of migration, both on foot as in Siberian reindeer and Canadian caribou, and ocean migration as in salmon, eels, turtles, and whales. It would seem that from an evolutionary perspective, the ability to enter into a *psi knowing* navigational state of mind in response to survival need has played a vital evolutionary role in the survival of the species across millions of years.

References

Bobbie. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobbie_the_Wonder_Dog

Mayer, E.L. (2007). *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind.* New York. Bantam Books.

Muller, B. (1965). *Experimentelle Untersuchungen uber das Heimfinden being Hund.* Inaugural Dissertation. Basel. Philosophisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultat der Universitat Basel.

Nahm, M. (2015). Mysterious Ways: The Riddle of the Homing Ability in Dogs and other Vertebrates. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, 79,* 140-155. This article can be downloaded free. See online *Exploring the Frontiers of Biology – Michael Nahm*

Prince. Irish Times. **https://www.irelandsown.ie/prince-the-amazing-irish-war-dog/**

Shine, J.B., Feather, S. R. (1962). The study of psi trailing in animals. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 16:1-22

Sheldrake, R. (2011). *Dogs that know when their owners are coming home: And other unexplained powers of animals. 2nd. Ed.* New York. Three Rivers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Tying it all together

In the Introduction I noted that despite thousands of reported ESP experiences, many of them verified, and hundreds of positive research findings demonstrating the existence of ESP, the issue of whether ESP occurs and whether the psi faculty exists is still controversial. In this book I have re-evaluated many case studies of claimed ESP experiences. In some cases I have concluded that there are more likely non-ESP explanations, including a few famous cases where ESP has been accepted without question. In three cases I concluded that the claimed ESP experience did not occur at all. However, that still leaves a wealth of cases where some form of ESP is the most likely explanation for what happened, leaving us with the problem of trying to understand the circumstances in which ESP is most likely to happen.

In this chapter I am restating a working hypothesis for when and why an ESP experience is most likely to occur. This is based upon on the experiences described in Chapters 19 and 20, In Chapter 19, Dr Mayer's four intuitives each told her that when they did a reading for a client they voluntarily left their everyday state of mind and entered another state, in which they came into direct communication with the mind of their client and could then 'read' them. Also in Chapter 19, Dr Mayer said of her experience when finding her sister's watch that without realising it she had entered into a different state of mind, during which 'it was as if I was being walked by the experience' to where her husband had hidden the watch, and while in that state of mind she felt no surprise on finding it.

In Chapter 20, Dr Muller described the unusual behaviour of the alpha dogs when homing, after being released at a site they did not know, behaviour that occurred *only* when homing. They first scouted around looking and sniffing, and then they paused and pointed in various directions until pointing towards home. Their posture then changed. They held their heads in 'a peculiarly stiff manner' and throughout the return journey it seemed to Muller that it was 'as if they were ridden by an alien force'. This description of their behaviour ties in with Mayer's experience of 'being walked' as if by some purposeful agency that knew where the watch was

hidden. Taking these descriptions together, it seems that while in this other state of mind they were able to access information not available to their everyday senses. In fact, the dogs homed better in darkness or dense mist where input from their everyday senses was at a minimum.

The Two States of Mind Hypothesis

This suggests that there two states of mind with regard to ESP: one in which ESP does not occur because it is not available to that state of mind, and one in which ESP does occur because it is natural to that state of mind.

I have termed them the 'everyday state of mind' necessary for the practicalities of everyday living, in which all new information to brain, and then to mind, is supplied by the senses, and the 'psi state of mind' in which new information is supplied direct to the mind through ESP. I have called it the 'psi state' because the hypothesis in parapsychology is that ESP experiences are considered to be manifestations of the psi faculty, hence known as psi phenomena, that operates independent of sensory input. Whether voluntarily, or involuntarily, it seems that the transition from the everyday state into a psi state always precedes the ESP experience, and the ESP experience ends when the everyday state of mind returns. We now need to consider how this hypothesis applies to the cases discussed in this book.

Voluntary transition into the Psi State

In Chapter 1 we met the gypsy woman who transitioned into the psi state on taking the hand of a client, in this case Phoebe Payne, in which she accurately foretold three specific items that Payne would see within the next seven days. In the 'Thoughts through Space' experiment Harold Sherman (Chapter 10) sat down in his New York study three times a week over five months with pen and paper to hand. He first 'emptied his mind' of everyday concerns, then entered a calm receptive state of mind and noted whatever words and images related to Hubert Wilkins and his Arctic expedition appeared in his mind. When Harold McCoy received Dr Mayer's call for help in finding her daughter's stolen harp (Chapter 16), he voluntarily entered into his psi dowsing state of mind and told her with complete confidence that the harp was still in Oakland. On receiving the Oakland street map he again entered his psi dowsing state while asking the rods as external indicators of his psi knowledge whether the harp was in this area or that area, as he methodically

traversed the map. Eventually he narrowed down the ‘Yes’ answers to an apartment block at a particular street intersection.

As described in Chapter 2, during a sitter/medium séance a medium voluntarily enters the receptive psi state in the hope and belief that someone on ‘the other side’ will ‘come through’ and talk to the sitter, or sitters, passing on information that the medium could not possibly have known. However, results from experiments initiated by Payne, and then with her sitters, in which they imagined a situation and the medium then described it, indicated that the medium was telepathically picking up agreed imagery of the sitters. This interpretation is supported by Mrs Heywood’s séance experience in which her friend ‘Karl’, who she imagined had been killed by the Nazis, seemed to confirm her belief by mentioning ‘grim circumstances he did not want to talk about’ when apparently talking through the medium. Instead, Heywood found that her friend was still alive and had not been trying to communicate anything. It is also supported by Dr Roxburgh’s experience when she attended a course on mediumship. During a training exercise in which participants were divided into pairs and she was acting as the sitter, her medium gave correct details concerning her very much alive brother. When she, in turn, was acting as the receptive medium, she supplied accurate details concerning her sitter’s home circumstances. Neither knew anything about the other until that session when they were paired together. The implications are that when in the receptive psi state mediums can telepathically pick up the thoughts and imagery in the mind of the sitter and relay them back in the belief, shared by both sitter and medium, that what has been communicated came from someone who has died. These results strongly support the claim that telepathy can, and does, occur between the minds of the living, but leaves open the question of whether post-mortem communication occurs, as there seems no way of distinguishing between the two possible sources. If the information is not known by the sitter at the time, but is later confirmed, then as with the gypsy woman’s prediction, it seems that the medium has precognitively known what the sitter would eventually know.

Involuntary Transitions into the Psi State

Because sensory input is reduced during sleep, many psi experiences occur in the form of vivid dreams, either just before going to sleep or just before

waking. In Chapter 4 Samuel Clemens had a vivid, precognitive, psi dream in which he ‘saw’ the metal coffin and the dead body of his younger brother, a sight that was fulfilled in five exact details six weeks later. Gail experienced a psi dream in which she was in telepathic communication with her husband, and ‘saw’ what he saw, while he was in a state of shock, when confronted with ER sitting by the nursing station, looking terminally ill (Chapter 9). The majority of the precognitive experiences presented in Chapter 19 occurred as vivid psi dreams remembered in full detail on waking, and in many cases carrying an inner certainty beyond rational doubt that they would be fulfilled.

It is likely that Mrs Agnes Paquet (Chapter 7) had a psi dream about her brother’s death while asleep that failed to wake her. It remained dormant in her mind until morning, making her feel depressed for no apparent reason, and was experienced during an involuntary transition into the psi state at the moment she turned round in her pantry to re-enter the kitchen. The everyday kitchen scene was momentarily replaced by a vision of her brother’s legs being caught up by tow ropes that pulled him over the stern of the tug boat into the harbour. At that moment she knew, with absolute certainty, that he had been drowned.

As discussed in Chapter 13, surveys indicate that around 40-45% of identical twins report a telepathic awareness of what is happening to their twin that cannot be explained by their everyday circumstances at the time. With those who remain in the same amniotic sac almost until birth, known as ‘late splitters’, this rises to around 55-60%. Sometimes this telepathic awareness is so acute that when one twin has been injured and is in pain, the uninjured twin feels their twin’s pain or injury, and their body mirrors the area of injury. This is termed telesomatic telepathy, and in one astonishing case the murderous rage of one twin overwhelmed the mind of his twin, so that both strangled their partners at around the same time.

Discussion

In Chapter 20 I indulged in some speculation by suggesting that, on feeling the seasonal urge to migrate, each migratory member in some species, or their alpha leaders in other species, enter into an involuntary state of ‘psi knowing’ where to go. In the case of bird migration I proposed that when each bird feels the irresistible urge to fly they transition into psi autopilot. During their flight they see the world slowly turning beneath them until the migratory

endpoint comes into view. On landing they re-enter everyday reality again. In ‘follow your leader’ herd and pack animals I have suggested that it is the alpha males or females that possess an inborn ability to transition into the psi state in response to group survival need, whilst the rest follow. The argument is that when their everyday senses are not able to solve the survival problem of where to go when local food supplies are running out, the increasing group need ‘switches on’ the autopilot psi state in the alpha leaders, until the new grounds are reached. If this hypothesis is correct, it indicates that psi knowing has played an important role in the survival of many species over evolutionary history.

Psi and Precognition

Of the three main forms of ESP (telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition) the anecdotal and research evidence is greatest for precognition as it is eminently testable. Yet, paradoxically, this is the most difficult form to accept. Precognition flies in the face of the before-and-after assumptions of daily experience and scientific experiment, based upon the concept that cause always precedes effect. Precognition, in complete contradiction, describes an experience for which no immediate cause yet exists in linear time as if it is somehow already in existence and acting back on the present by influencing cause and effect towards its fulfilment. When in this psi knowing state of experiential reality present and future are somehow as one.

The evidence for verified precognitions is considerable, and is supported by research using physiological changes indicating subconscious anticipatory arousal, that people can anticipate ahead of random computer selection whether the next picture they will see on the screen will be emotionally disturbing or neutral, with results well beyond chance. Is there any way we can account for this causal anomaly?

What is being pre-cognised?

In every case what is being pre-cognised in everyday terms is a future experience, either to be experienced personally or by others. What is not being pre-cognised are any physical causes associated with that experience, of which no one is yet aware. In the case of a car accident or an explosion, for example, it is not the unseen physics of momentum, collision and crumpling of metal, or the chemical reactions of the explosion and heated expansion of gases that is precognised, but the experiences of those involved as a consequence. What is precognised is always a mental experience that will occur in experiential reality, not physical reality.

Present and future

The term ‘future’ relates to the world of the everyday state of mind in which conscious awareness of events is limited to what is happening at the present moment through information supplied by the senses. When someone transitions from the everyday state of mind into the psi state, they enter into a different mental reality in which, according to the Dr Mayer’s intuitives, the time and distance constraints of the everyday state of mind fall away. What will be experienced at some future moment in the everyday state of mind becomes accessible in the present of the psi state. For example, a person has a psi dream of an experience that exists in ‘psi time’ but has not been experienced in every day time. When it is remembered on waking it is interpreted in everyday causal time as ‘pre-cognitive’ because in our sensory dependent state of mind it has not yet happened so has not yet been cognised.

Mental reality

I have commented repeatedly throughout the book that, despite the dramatic increase in our understanding of how the brain works, down to molecular level on the one hand, and levels of data processing on the other, the neurosciences are unable to offer any explanation for the *mental* experience of *consciousness* together with our *desires, feelings* and *emotions.* However, for all practical, clinical and neurosurgical purposes, the basic hypothesis of the neurosciences that brain and mind are two sides of the same coin works well. It rests upon the close correlation between known areas of brain activity and reported mental activity as explored by neuro-*psychology*. But

correlation between brain activity and mental activity on which the cognitive neurosciences are based, is not explanation, although it is often presented as such. For example, it is implicit in the title of neuro scientist David Eagleman's book *The Brain: The Story of You*, and the title of neuropsychologist Chris Frith's book *Making up the Mind: How the Brain Creates our Mental World.* Despite their titles, the reality is that we still have no idea how the physical brain enclosed within the physical skull creates our mental experience of looking at a world that is 'out there' existing in separate independence from ourselves as observers living 'in here' behind our eyes.

Neurophysiology can no more explain our mental world of experiencing than psychology can explain the neurophysiology of nerve impulses and synaptic activity. All that we know as an empirical brain-*mind* fact is that when the brain reaches the highly advanced level of neural processing correlated with waking up and feeling conscious an, as yet, inexplicable phase transition from brain data processing into *mental data processing* occurs. Different in kind from brain processing, *mental processing* operates in terms of *thoughts, feelings, desires, ideals, ambitions, sense of self, relationship with others*, and so on that is completely absent from physical brain processing. Despite being different in kind the two interact in a continuous feedback loop.

Unlike our brain, the mental processes of our mind (and this includes animal minds as well) are not constrained by the laws of physics, because minds are not physical entities. When we are in our everyday state of mind, our conscious awareness is centred upon input from our senses. They are continually informing us of change in the world around us that is occurring at the present moment on which we base our everyday concept of causal time - past, present and hoped for future. This is assumed to be a universal reality that applies as much to ourselves as to the physical world, and denies the possibility of psi and ESP. But the experiential and research evidence for psi phenomena as discussed in this book is strong. As mentioned in the Introduction, on completion of his review of the empirical research literature Dr David Vernon (2021) sums up the evidence for psi phenomena by saying that '*the field of psi has clearly demonstrated consistency and replicability of effects. Hence, the continued rhetorical arguments stating that no evidence for psi exists are simply not tenable*' (p. 291).

This challenges any interpretation of our mental selves as bound by

physical laws only. Mental reality is different in kind from physical reality. In the psi state of mind telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition are the natural channels of incoming mental information and communication, unaffected by the physical variables of distance, time, and place. Psi time is different from linear clock time. Our problem is that we keep trying to explain psi phenomena using concepts derived from our familiarity with sensory driven everyday reality and the laws of physics, but as these concepts do not apply to psi reality they offer confusion instead of explanation. We are asking questions that are not appropriate to psi reality, rather like asking if the colour red weighs more than the colour blue when comparison by 'weight' is an irrelevant concept.

Like the conceptual advances in the physical sciences, from classical physics to quantum physics, and Newtonian universal space and time to Einsteinian special and general relativity, we need a new conceptual paradigm in the mental sciences that accepts and incorporates the psi faculty and psi phenomena into a psychology of the whole. Denial of psi is not an answer.

References

Eagleman, D. (2015). *The Brain: The Story of You*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Frith, C. (2007). *Making Up the Mind: How the Brain creates our Mental World.* Oxford, Blackwell.

Vernon, D. (2021). *Dark Cognition: Evidence for Psi and its Implications for Consciousness.* London. Routledge.

REFERENCES

Adams, P. (2014). *The Little Book of Ghosts.* Stroud, UK. The History Press.

Arcangel, D. (2005) *After life Encounters: Ordinary people, Extraordinary experiences.* Charlottesville, VA. Hampton Roads.

Bardens, D. (1970). *Mysterious Worlds.* London, W.H. Allen.

Bardens, D. (1991). *Ahead of time: The mystery of precognition,* London. Robert Hale.

Beloff, J. (1993). *Parapsychology: A Precise History.* London. Athlone Press.

Bendit, L, J. (1944). *Paranormal Cognition.* London, Faber & Faber.

Bendit, L. J (1969/2008). Profile: Phoebe Payne Bendit. *Psypioneer, Vol 4. No 10 pp225-231* (reprint from Parapsychology Foundation Newsletter Vol 16, No 5 (Sept-Oct 1969).

Berger, A. S. (1988). *Evidence of Life After Death: A casebook for the tough minded.* New York. Charles C Thomas, (reissued in 2010 by the Survival Research Foundation, Aventura, Florida.).

Blackmore, S. (1983). 'Are Out-of-Body Experiences Evidence for Survival?' *Anabiosis:Journal for Near Death Studies,* 3, 137-155.

Bobbie. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobbie_the_Wonder_Dog

Booth, J. (1986). *Psychic Paradoxes.* New York. Prometheus Books.

Brennan, J,H. (1997). *Time travel: A new perspective.* St Paul. Minn. Llewellyn Publ.

Broad, C, D. (1962). *Lectures on Psychical Research.* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Broderick, D. (2007). *Outside The Gates of Science.* New York, Thunder's Mouth Press.

Broderick, D & Goertzel, B. eds. (2015). *Evidence for Psi: Thirteen Empirical Research Reports.* Jefferson, NC. McFarland & Co.

Brookes-Smith, C. (1973). Data-tape recorded experimental PK phenomena. *JSPR* 47: 69-89.

Brookes-Smith,C. and Hunt, D.W. (1970) Some experiments in psychokinesis. *JSPR* 45: 265-81.

Broughton, R. (1991) *Parapsychology: The controversial science.* London, Rider.

Brusewitz, G., Cherkas, L., Harris, and J., Parker. (2013). Exceptional

Experiences Amongst Twins. *JSPR* 77. 220-235.
Cade, M. C. & Coxhead, N. (1979). *The awakened mind: Biofeedback and the development of higher states of awareness.* Shaftesbury: Element Books.
The life and work of C. Maxwell Cade – Mind Mirror EEG. www.mindmirroreeg.com/cMaxwellCade.htm. Retrieved 5th January 2013.
Caidin, M. (1994) *Ghosts of the Air: True Stories of Aerial Hauntings.* New York, Gulde Press.
Carpenter, J,C. (2012). *First Sight: ESP and Parapsychology in Everyday Life.* Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield.
Carter, C. (2007). *Science and Psychic Phenomena: The fall of the house of sceptics.* Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions.
Carter, C. (2010). *Science and the near-death experience: How consciousness survives death.* Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions.
Carter, C, (2012). *Science and the Afterlife: Evidence for the immortality of consciousness.* Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions.
Cassirer, M. (1988). The Ghost of C.S. Lewis. *Journal SPR*. vol 55:33-35.
Chalmers, D, J. (1995) Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), 200-219.
Chalmers, D. J. (1996) *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Charman, R, A. (2014) Miss Payne and the gypsy woman's self-devised precognitive test. *Paranormal Review* Issue 69: 8-13
Charman, R, A. (2017). Re-evaluation of the Samuel Clemens dream precognitive case – Did he foresee the future funeral casket of his younger brother Henry? *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol 81: 17-25.
Chorley, W,R. *Royal Air Force Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War*:
Vol. One (1993) *Aircraft and Crew Losses* 1939/1940. Leicester, Midland County Publications.
Vol. Two. (2013) *Aircraft and Crew Losses* 1941 (2nd ed.) Leicester, Midland County Publications.
Clostermann, P. (1951). *The Big Show: The Greatest Pilot's Story of World War II.* London, Cassell.
Crookall, R. (1973). Out-of-Body Experiences and Survival. In J,D. Pearce-Higgins & G.S. Whitby, (eds), *Life, Death & Psychical Research.*

London: Rider & Co.
DeLorme, A. Beischel, J. Michel, L. Bocuzzi,M. Radin, D. Mills, P,J (2013) Electrocortical Activity associated with subjective communication with the deceased. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 20th, November. doi: 10.3389/fpsg.2013.00834.
Dossey, L. (2000). *Reinventing Medicine: Beyond Mind-Body to a New Era of Healing.* San Francisco: Harper.
Desmond Arthur. Wikipedia. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Arthur. Cached
Dossey, L. (2009) *The Power of Premonitions: How Knowing the Future can Shape our Lives.* London, Hay House
Eagleman, D. (2015). *The Brain: The Story of You*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Edwards, S. (1996). *Reincarnation: A critical examination.* New York, Prometheus Books.
Evans, H. (2002). *Seeing Ghosts: Experiences of the paranormal.* London, John Murray.
Feather Rhine, S,R. Schmicker, M,S. (2005) *The Gift: Extraordinary paranormal experiences of ordinary people.* London, Rider. UK. Palgrave Macmillan.
Fontana, D. (2005). *Is There An Afterlife? A comprehensive overview of the evidence.* Ropley, Hampshire: O Books.
Fuller, J.,G. (1976). *The Ghost of Flight 401*. New York. Berkley Publishing.
Fuller, J., G. (1979). *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*. London. Souvenir Press.
Gale (1991) *Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology.* 3rd ed.
Gauld, A. Cornell, A,D. (1982). *Mediumship and Survival: A century of investigations.* London. Heinemann.
Goddard, V. (1966). Breaking the time barrier. *Light.* Vol.83.No3465:62-70. London. College of Psychic Studies.
Greaves, J. (2017). *Personal communication.*
Green, C. (1968). *Out-Of-The-Body Experiences.* Oxford. Institute of Psychophysical Research.
Gurney, E. Myers, F.W.H. Podmore, F. (1888) *Phantasms of the Living.* London. Trubner & Co.
Hadaway, S. (2017a) *Personal communication.*
Hadaway, S. (2017b) *Personal communication.*

Hadaway, S. (2017c) *Personal communication.*
Hare, P, R. *The Royal Aircraft Factory BE5.* www.crossandcockade.com/uploads/BE5.pd (retrieved 24/5/16 PDF)
Hart, H. (1959). *The Enigma of Survival. The Case For and Against an After Life.* London. Rider & Co.
Hearne, K. (1989). *Visions of the Future: The Definitive Study of Premonitions.* Wellingborough, UK. The Aquarian Press.
Henry, J. ed. (2005). *Parapsychology: Research on Exception Experiences.* London. Routledge.
Heywood, R. (1959). *Beyond The Reach Of Sense: An Inquiry into Extra-Sensory Perception.* New York. Dutton & Co (published in England as *The Sixth Sense.*1959).
ttp://croydonairportcalling.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/captain-raymond-hinchliffe-and-seances.html (retrieved September 21, 2017)
Evidential Reports ASCS - ascsi.org www.ascsi.org/ASCS/Library/EvidenceRoom/Evidential. (Retrieved 21/9/2017)
Holmes, A. (2010). *Twidders: Exploration of the Time-Lost Continuum and Travel.* Huntsville, AR. Ozark Mountain Publ.
Holt, N,J. Simmonds-Moore, C. Luke, D. French, C.C. (2012). *Anomalistic Psychology.* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
Hume, S. (2015). *The R101 Séances in the Light of the once-secret Jarman Report.* Part 2. Light. Vol.136.No1: 5-17. London. College of Psychic Studies.
nglis, B. (1984). *Science and Parascience: A History of the Paranormal 1914-1939*. London. Hodder & Stoughton.
rwin, H, J. (2003) *An Introduction to Parapsychology.* (4th ed.) Jefferson, NC. McFarland & Co.
arman, A. (1980). 'The R101 rises again' - *Alpha* - No 6 - Jan-Feb 1980, pp.12-25.
Mackenzie, A. (1980) The Airmen Who Would Not Die by John, G, Fuller. Book review. JSPR. Vol 50:314-16.
Wikipedia. 'Elsie Mackay'(retrieved 12/7/16)
Online discussion:
ttp://croydonairportcalling.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/captain-raymond-hinchliffe-and-seances.html (retrieved September 21, 2017)

Evidential Reports ASCS - ascsi.org
www.ascsi.org/ASCS/Library/EvidenceRoom/Evidential. (Retrieved 21/9/2017)

ohnson, R, C. (1953). *The Imprisoned Splendour.* Norwich: Pelegrin Trust.

Kelly, E.F., Kelly, E.W., Crabtree, A., Gauld, A., Grosso, M., & Greyson, B. (2007). *Irreducible Mind: Towards a psychology for the 21st century.* Lanham, Maryland. Rowman & Littleman.

.e Shan, L. (2009). *A New Science of the Paranormal.* Wheaton, Illinois. Quest Books.

.ommel, van, P. (2007). *Consciousness beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience.* New York. Harper One.

.yttelton, Edith (1937). *Some Cases of Prediction: A Study.* London. G. Bell & Sons.

Mackay, Elsie, Wikipedia. (retrieved 12/7/16)

Mackenzie, A. (1974). *Riddle of the Future: A modern study of precognition.* London, Andrew Barker Ltd.

Mackenzie, A. (1980). The Airmen Who Would Not Die by John, G, Fuller. Book review. JSPR.

MacKenzie, A. (1982). *Hauntings and Apparitions: An Investigation of the Evidence.* St Albans, UK. Granada Publ.

Mackenzie, A. Goldney, K,M. (1970) Two experiences of an apparition. *Journal SPR* vol 45: 389-391.

Martin, M. Augustine, K (2015) *The Myth of an Afterlife: The Case against Life after Death.* Lanham, Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield

Masefield. P. (1972) The Montrose Ghost. *FLIGHT International (pp900-902) 21 December.* https://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/

Masefield, P, & Gunston, B. (2002) *Flight Path: The Autobiography of Sir Peter Masefield.* Shrewsbury, UK. Airlife Publications.

Mayer, E, L. (2001).“On Telepathic Dreams?”: An Unpublished Paper by Robert Stoller. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association.* 49 (2): 638.

Mayer, E, L (2007). *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Scepticism and the inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind.* New York. Bantam Books.

Middlebrook, M. Everett, C. (2011) *The Bomber Command War Diary – An operational reference book 1939-45.* Hersham, Surrey. Midland Publishers.

Minero, S. (2014). *Demystifying the Out-of- Body Experience.* Woodbery, Minn. Lewellyn Publ.

Muller, B. (1965). *Experimentelle Untersuchungen uber das Heimfinden being Hund.*

naugural Dissertation. Basel. Philosophisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultat der Universitat Basel.

Murphy, M. (1992). *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the further evolution of human nature.* New York: Jeremy P Tarcher/Putnam Book.

Myers, F.W.H. (1903/2001). *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death.* Charlottesville, VA: Studies in Consciousness/Russell Targ Editions, Hampton Roads,

ysterial - The Paranormal Community mysterial.org.uk/cgi-bin/index.cgi?action=viewnews&id=940 (Retrieved 21/9/2017)

Nadeau, R. Kafatos, M. (2001). *The Non-local Universe: The New Physics and Matters of Mind.* Oxford, UK. OUP.

Nahm, M (2015). Mysterious ways: The riddle of the homing ability of dogs and other vertebrates. *J SPR.* Vol 79: 140-155. July issue. Available for downloading from www.michaelnahm.com

Oaten, E.W. (1928). *The Chaffin Will Case.* Manchester: The Two Worlds Publishing Co.

Ozark Research Institute (www.ozarkresearch.org)

Paine, A,B (1912). *Mark Twain: A Biography.* New York, Harper & Brothers.

Payne, P, D. (1938). *Man's Latent Powers.* London, Faber & Faber.

Payne, P, D. Bendit, L, J. (1943). *The Psychic Sense.* (rev. ed. 1958) London, Faber & Faber.

Payne, P, D. Bendit, L, J. (1950). *This World and That: An analytic study of psychic communication.* London, Faber & Faber.

Peake, A. (2012). *The Labyrinth of Time; The illusion of past, present and future.* London, Arctarus Publishing.

Perry, M. (1971). Correspondence. *JSPR* 46. No 749: 203-206 .

Phillips, J,B. (1967). *Ring of Truth: A translator's testimony.* London, Hodder and Stoughton.

Phillips, J, B. (1984). *The Price of Success: An autobiography.* London, Hodder & Stoughton.

Phillips, V. Robinson, E. (1984). *The Wounded Healer – J.B. Phillips.* London,

Triangle, SPCK.
layfair, G.L. (2012). *Twin Telepathy*. 3rd ed. Guildford. UK. White Crow Books.
limmer, M., & King, B (2004). *Beyond Coincidence: Stories of amazing coincidences and the mystery and mathematics that lie behind them*, Cambridge, UK. Icon books.
owers, R. (2005). *Mark Twain: A Life*. New York, Free Press. N.C. McFarland & Co.
rince. Irish Times. https://www.irelandsown.ie/prince-the-amazing-irish-war-dog/
si Encyclopedia (2017) *Precognitions.* Society for Psychical Research.
adin, D (2006). *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in a Quantum Reality*. New York, Paraview Pocket Books.
hine, J.B., Feather, S. R. (1962) The study of psi trailing in animals. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 16:1-22
hine, L.E. (1961). *Hidden Channels of the Mind.* London, Victor Gollanz Ltd.
hine, L,E. (1967). *ESP in Life and Lab: Tracing hidden channels.* London, Collier-Macmillan.
hine, L, E. (1982). *The Invisible Picture: A Study of Psychic Experiences.* Jefferson, N.C. MacFarland.
hine Feather, S, Schmicker, M.S. (2005). *The Gift: Extraordinary paranormal experiences of ordinary people.* London, Rider.
oach, M. (2007). *Six Feet Over: Adventures in the Afterlife*. Edinburgh. Canongate Books.
oach, M. (2013). Personal communication re copies of the wills and court documents.
ollings, C. (2017) *Personal communication.*
oyal Air Force - Drem History. http://www.rafdrem.co.uk/history.html
ubic, B., Brooks, A., & Schwartz, G. (2006). *In vitro* effects of Reiki treatment on bacterial cultures: Role of experimental context and practitioner well-being. *Journal Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 12, 7-13.
acks, O. (2012). *Hallucinations.* London, Picador.
alter W. H. (1928). Case of the Will of James, L, Chaffin. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.* Vol. XXXV1 p 517-24.

alter, W,H. (1938). *Ghosts and Apparitions.* London, Bell & Sons.
chatzman, M. (1980). *The Story of Ruth: One woman's haunting psychiatric odyssey.* New York, Putman & Sons.
chmicker, M. (2002). *Best Evidence: An Investigative Reporter's Three Year Quest.* (2nd ed). San Jose, Writer's Club.
chwartz, G,E. Simon, W.L. (2002). *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life after Death.* New York, Pocket Books.
cotsman (22 May, 2013) The Ghost of Montrose air base to be honoured. http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/ghost-of-montrose-air-base-to-be-honoured-1-2940025#ixzz46duHMDe6
heldrake, R. (2011) *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Own: And Other Unexplained Powers of Animals.* New York. Three Rivers Press
hores, C,F. Thomas, C. (2006). *2nd Tactical Air Force. Vol 3. From the Rhine to Victory*: January to May, 1945. Hersham, UK. Ian Allen Publ.
idgwick, E. (1891). On the evidence for clairvoyance. Part 1. *PSPR* 7 p30-39.
idgwick, E,M. (1923). Phantasms of the Living. *Proc. SPR.* Vol 33, pp 23-429.
mith, H, E. (ed) (2010). *Autobiography of Mark Twain.* Volume 1. Berkeley, University of California Press.
'arg, R. (2012). *The Reality of ESP: A physicist's proof of psychic abilities.* Wheaton, Ill. Theosophical Publishing House.
'aylor, J. (2020) *Contact with the Future: The Nature of Extrasensory Perception.* Independently published.
'oynbee, A. (1968). *Man's Concern with Death.* London, Hodder & Stoughton.
'ymn, M. (2008). *The Articulate Dead: They Brought the Spirit World Alive.* Lakeville, Minn. Galde Press.
'ymn, M. (2011). *The Afterlife Revealed: What happens When We Die.* Guildford, UK. White Crow Books.
'yrrell, G.N.M. (1953). *Apparitions,* 2nd ed. London: The Society for Psychical Research.
'anderbilt, G., Furness, T (1959). *Double Exposure: A Twin Autobiography.* Frederick Muller, London.
'ernon, D. (2021). *Dark Cognition: Evidence for Psi and its implications for Consciousness.* London, Routledge.

Vargo, E. (2018). *Time Loops: Precognition, Retrocausation, and the Unconscious.* San Antonio, Anomalist Books.

Vest, D, J. (1954). *Psychical Research Today.* London, Duckworth.

Vilkins H. Sherman H,M. (2004). *Thoughts Through Space: a remarkable adventure in the realms of mind* (reprint with new foreword). Charlottesville, VA..Hampton Roads Publ.

Vilson, B. (2017). *Personal communication.*

Vilson, C. (1985). *Afterlife: an Investigation of the Evidence for Life After Death.* London, Harrap.

Vilson, C. (1988/2006). *Beyond the Occult: Twenty Years Research into the Paranormal.* London, Bantam Books.

Vilson, I. (1987). *The After Death Experience.* London, Sidgwick & Jackson.

Vilson, I (1995) *In Search of Ghosts.* London, Headline.

Vright, W. (1993) *Time – Gateway to Immortality.* Southampton, UK. Wright Books.

Vright, W. (1990) *Millergate: The Real Glenn Miller Story.* Southampton, UK. Wrightway Publishing.